

# NASSAU COUNTY Department of Social Services

## ANNUAL REPORT 2014



**Edward P. Mangano, County Executive**

**John E. Imhof, PhD, Commissioner**



## **Nassau County Legislature**

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## **I. Message from the County Executive**



### **A Message from County Executive Ed Mangano:**

I am pleased to present the 2014 Annual Report of the Nassau County Department of Social Services (DSS). As a longtime public servant, I understand the many challenges facing government, especially during times of economic stress and crises. As the safety net for our residents who are facing economic distress, DSS and all of its dedicated staff perform an extraordinary job addressing the needs of individuals and families throughout our County.

Nassau County DSS has proven to be one of the most innovative and forward-thinking human services agencies in the nation, consistently enhancing its services and programs through on-going quality management initiatives that advocate innovation and efficiency in these days of limited financial resources. Of special note is the extensive efforts I have supported to root out Medicaid waste, fraud and abuse. In 2014, DSS fraud investigators uncovered \$28 million in recipient and provider fraud, waste and abuse across all program areas. On behalf of Nassau County taxpayers, we will continue our aggressive efforts to ensure that those who try to cheat the system be prosecuted to the fullest extent permitted under the law.

We are fortunate to have such a dedicated team of public servants who - along with our DSS Advisory Council, community service providers and volunteers - each day help the most vulnerable citizens of Nassau County.

I commend the work our employees perform and thank them on behalf of our 1.3 million residents.

Nassau County cares deeply about its most vulnerable residents and you will be impressed to read of the breadth and scope of DSS' 2014 accomplishments.

Thank you!



## II. Message from the Commissioner

I am pleased to present the Department's 2014 Annual Report which describes our programs and services and highlights our accomplishments during calendar year 2014.

DSS continued to address the needs of Nassau residents in 2014. While the aftermath of super storm Sandy is largely behind us and the economy shows signs of improvement, many family and individuals in Nassau still need a helping hand. I am happy to report that DSS has worked tirelessly with other county and state agencies to help meet the needs of many families.

Summarized here are selected program statistics from 2014:

- \$26.7 million identified in Social Services savings for 2014 from uncovering welfare waste, fraud and abuse;
- Since January 2011, Nassau taxpayers have been spared a total of \$52.4 Million in welfare waste, fraud and abuse;
- Over \$5.1 million in cost savings for emergency housing since 2011 due to better interagency coordination and the use of technology
- The Homeless Re-stabilization project moved 127 families with 386 people and 459 single adults from emergency shelters into permanent housing
- Since 2010 the amount of total security deposits paid to landlords was reduced from \$1.86 million to just over \$14,540 in 2014 by replacing a cash security deposit with a surety agreement
- Day care services were provided for 5,400 children in 4,100 working families
- DSS administered 112,000 Medicaid only cases for over 170,000 individuals or 13% of Nassau's population
- Approximately 21,000 applications for temporary assistance were processed
- Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) were provided to almost 41,000 Nassau families and 25,000 HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) benefits were provided Nassau households
- Child Protective Services investigated/assessed over 6,200 SCR reports
- DSS helped almost 32,000 families obtain child support
- Almost 200,000 registered visitors came to the DSS building in Uniondale

But statistics do not tell the whole story. Hundreds of job seekers were able to find employment at the job fair held in 2014 which attracted 350 employers and 8,000 job seekers to the Nassau Coliseum. In Children's Services the Family Assessment Response (FAR) program diverted a number of families from traditional child abuse and neglect investigations to a more family centric approach by engaging families in meetings to help identify areas of concern and work towards a solution while reducing protective services intakes and recidivism.

By far, the greatest resource we have is our staff: DSS boasts almost 900 trained and motivated employees. During 2014, the staff received many compliments for their dedication and service to Nassau residents. Some of these sentiments are captured in our Resident Feedback section – please take a look to see what your neighbors are saying about DSS staff. I think you'll agree that our staff is second to none when it comes to customer service.

Finally, we could not present this report without acknowledging with great appreciation the unconditional support and encouragement of County Executive Ed Mangano. The County Executive cares deeply about all of Nassau's children, adults and seniors and has consistently committed himself to supporting programs and initiatives for Nassau's most vulnerable

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2014 annual report and please feel free to visit us on the County website at [www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/DSS/index.html](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/DSS/index.html).

John E. Imhof, PhD  
Commissioner, DSS



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## DSS Annual Report



### III. Mission Statement

## *Mission Statement*

The Nassau County Department of Social Services is committed to strengthening and preserving families by providing financial assistance and services to residents of Nassau County in accordance with state and federal regulations and laws. DSS is dedicated to providing quality service and maintaining the dignity and respect of those we serve. Specifically, the Department is responsible to:

- Provide aid to eligible recipients through the Family Assistance, Safety Net, Day Care, Employment, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly called food stamps), Medicaid and Home Energy Assistance Programs.
- Establish an initial child support obligation of a legally responsible individual through the Family Court, collect support payments, enforce and modify existing support orders.
- Protect children, adults and families by enforcing the mandates of New York State Social Services Law.



*Main office complex for DSS at 60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Uniondale, NY*



## DSS Facts and Figures

### Applications

Totals for	2013	2014
Family Assistance	5,277	5,432
Safety Net Assistance	11,508	12,355
SNAP	22,475	23,120
Medicaid	41,691	22,615
Day Care	3,828	4,470



FACTS & FIGURES

### Active Cases

Figures as of:	12/31/2013		12/31/2014	
	Cases	Individuals	Cases	Individuals
Family Assistance	2,878	6,747	2,909	6,799
Safety Net Assistance	4,111	6,227	4,554	6,842
Medicaid	80,377	119,817	91,832	150,104
Medicaid SSI	20,510	20,532	20,099	20,115
Family Health Plus	16,139	40,975	15	45
SNAP-NPA (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program - Non Public Assistance)	35,330	57,065	35,234	55,211
HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program)	3,017	5,034	2,756	4,731
Services (Primarily Day Care)	5,559	15,744	5,419	15,554
Unduplicated Individuals		213,569		209,069



### 2013 - 2014 Budget Comparison

	2013	2014	% Change
Administration	\$ 69,152,604	\$ 70,198,842	2%
Medicaid	\$ 254,850,679	\$ 248,230,297	-3%
Family Assistance	\$ 27,866,616	\$ 26,698,019	-4%
Safety Net Assistance	\$ 38,216,419	\$ 39,459,840	3%
HEAP	\$ 98,481	\$ 149,797	52%
Burials	\$ 218,660	\$ 225,199	3%
Foster Care	\$ 16,774,033	\$ 12,519,197	-25%
Children in State Custody	\$ 5,225,000	\$ 5,411,617	4%
Juvenile Delinquents/PINS	\$ 7,405,773	\$ 2,974,669	-60%
Non Secure Detention	\$ 575,000	\$ 575,000	0%
Adoption Subsidies	\$ 4,847,067	\$ 4,783,927	-1%
Adoption Fees	\$ 35,998	\$ 21,568	-40%
Home Maker Services	\$ 411,444	\$ 297,640	-28%
Prevention Services	\$ 6,328,898	\$ 6,662,807	5%
Independent Living	\$ 270,073	\$ 315,063	17%
Special Education	\$ 16,442,278	\$ 16,990,526	3%
Day Care	\$ 57,465,533	\$ 58,448,225	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 506,184,556</b>	<b>\$ 493,962,233</b>	<b>-2%</b>



#### IV. DSS Advisory Council

New York Social Services law requires local districts to have an Advisory Council and Nassau County has one of the most active councils in the entire state. The purpose of the Council is to advise the Commissioner concerning programs and policies pertaining to public assistance, medical care and services to children, families and adults. The Council also identifies service gaps in the community, assists the Department in publicizing available programs and helps to educate constituents, service providers and

public officials regarding the Department's policies. Currently there are over 70 members representing hospitals, schools, service providers, non-profit agencies, faith based organizations, and recipients of services. In addition to 3 active sub-committees, the Advisory Council holds two public forums annually. The Public Forum held in November 2014 had more than 80 people in attendance to learn about current trends in substance abuse on Long Island.

#### Executive Committee of the DSS Advisory Council





Having a hard time  
making ends meet?

Check your eligibility for economic supports at:

**myBenefits.ny.gov**



## V. Lobby

The Department of Social Services is the largest of the Nassau County agencies located in the HHS Building at 60 Charles Lindbergh Boulevard in Uniondale, NY (60 CLB). Other agencies that receive visitors include the Office of Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and Developmental Disabilities Services; Office for the Aging; Office of Youth Services; Office for the Physically Challenged; and the Health Department.

### Lobby Status Tracking System

The HHS building registers about 1,000 visitors per day. To manage the daily visitors to the building, the County employs an HHS Visitor Status Tracking System. The Status Tracking System monitors the progression of visitors from the time they enter the building to the time they leave, and through each

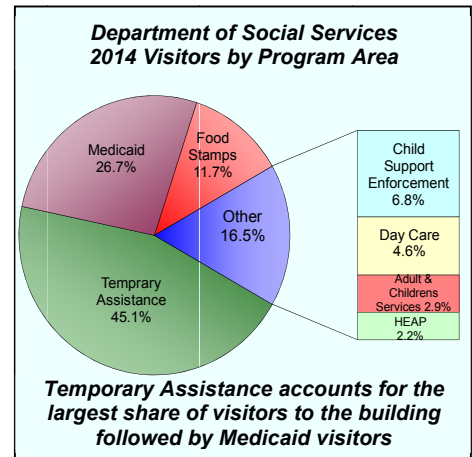
of the services from which they received assistance. Visitors register with the Community Service Representatives at our Welcome Desk where they are logged into the Status Tracking System database. In this way our clients are served in an efficient and timely manner.

During 2014, over 200,000 visitors to HHS were served at 60 CLB,



completing over a quarter of a million activities.

The Lobby Status Tracking System provides management with up-to-the-minute information on the traffic flow in the lobby.



This information allows management to make daily adjustments in staff assignments to best meet the service needs of our clients. The Status Tracking System also provides data that is used to analyze monthly and yearly traffic cycles as well as longer term traffic patterns and trends. This information is used to help optimize staffing requirements to service our clients on an ongoing basis.



*Artistic rendition of the Nassau County DSS customer service lobby at 60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd. in Uniondale, NY*



## 2014 Highlights

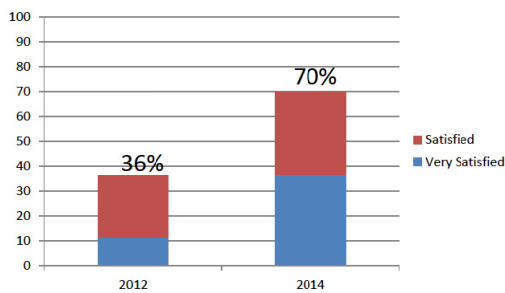
In 2014 the lobby received a makeover with new seating and a new reception areas as well as

new paint on the walls. The new seating increased capacity and also increased the safety and comfort of visitors to the building. A new reception area on the north

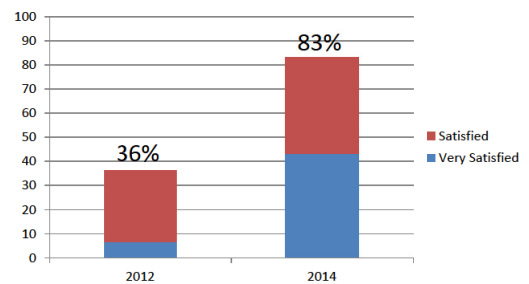
side of the lobby was put in place to streamline the application process. Clients report that these changes improved their experience coming to the building.



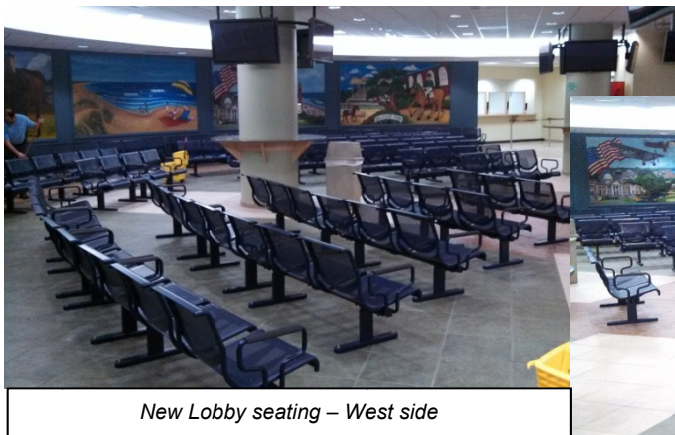
Overall Satisfaction with Lobby



Overall Rating of Visit



Clients visiting the building seem to be impressed with the lobby and are more satisfied overall with their visit.



## VI. Customer Service

As with any large organization the Department can sometimes be a challenge to navigate.



The Department maintains a Customer Service unit that responds to calls from clients, advocates, family members,

government officials and the community.

Customer Service answers questions and resolves issues directly or forwards the information to the appropriate staff for response and resolution.

The Customer Service staff is available to answer calls during regular business hours **Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.** at **516-227-7474**.

The general DSS information number, **516-227-8519** can be accessed 24 hrs per day, 7 days per week.

Legislative staff and government officials can call **516-227-7471** to speak to an Administrative Assistant. A signed release is required to share information regarding constituents or specific case information. Telephones are answered **Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.**

In addition to the Customer Service unit, New York State maintains a website ([www.mybenefits.ny.gov](http://www.mybenefits.ny.gov)), where residents can explore the services for which they may be eligible.

## VII. Emergency Services

In addition to providing services Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:45 p.m., the Department maintains an emergency services program that operates from **6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays**, and continuously on weekends and holidays. Emergency services can be reached at **516-573-**

**8626** and includes referrals to emergency temporary housing, referrals to New York State for suspected child abuse, emergency fuel arrangements, referrals to appropriate community agencies (if warranted), domestic violence intervention and hotline

information and housing through **WARM BED**, a seasonal program available in the winter months (**1-866- WARBED**). Several of these programs have income eligibility guidelines which are explained by the emergency service staff responding to calls.



**Warmbed Emergency Winter Shelter Program For The Homeless To Begin Thanksgiving Eve**  
 With cold weather approaching, Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano today announced that **WARMBED**, Nassau County's Emergency Shelter Relief Program for homeless individuals and families during the winter months, will be activated Wednesday, November 28th, 2014 beginning at 6:00 p.m.



## VIII. Domestic Violence

The Department has developed a safe, secure interviewing area for applicants or recipients who are victims of Domestic Violence. The Department helps ensure a victim's ability to remain safe and access services to move towards self-sufficiency. This may include access to emergency shelter at a secure location.

The Department also plays a major role in the County Executive's Family Violence Task Force (FVTF) which brings many of the county's not-for-profit and governmental resources together to focus on family violence policy issues and help raise public awareness of this social problem. DSS Commissioner John Imhof serves as the chairperson of the task force.

The 2014 annual Family Violence conference was held on April 11<sup>th</sup> at Long Island University Post. Through grant funds, the FVTF held a free all-day conference which included a continental breakfast and lunch. There were more than 200 people in attendance. Lanyards and pad folios were also distributed with the task force motto, "Violence is not the answer."



### Nassau County Family Violence Task Force



If you are a victim of family or domestic violence please call the 24hr hotline at (516) 542-0404...

### Domestic Violence Community Resource Directory For all emergencies please dial 911

24/7 DV & Sexual Assault Hotline	(516) 542-0404
The Safe Center, LI	(516) 465-4700
Circulo de la Hispanidad, Inc. - Crisis Intervention	(516) 889-2849
Child Abuse/Maltreatment Hotline (Albany)	(800) 342-3720
Mandated Reporters	(800) 635-1522
Hispanic Counseling	(516) 538-2613
NC District Attorney's Office	(516) 571-4967
NYS Spanish Domestic Violence Hotline	(800) 942-6908



Nassau County Family Court	(516) 493-4000
Nassau County Adult Protective Services	(516) 227-8472
NC Office for the Aging (HELP-LINE)	(516) 227-8900
NC Department of Mental Health (HELP-LINE)	(516) 227-TALK
NC Crime Victims Assistance Program	(516) 573-8207
Spouse Abuse Group Education (SAGE)	(516) 935-6858
Department of Social Services General Information	(516) 227-8519



## IX. Fraud Investigations



The Department maintains an Office of Investigations (DSS-OI). Within the Office of Investigations there are three units: Special Investigations, Contract Investigations and Liens and Recovery. The

Liens and Recovery Unit is tasked with recovering resources from estates and overpayments. The Special Investigations and Contract Investigations units work with the Department's benefits program areas and other government agencies to investigate potential waste, fraud and abuse to ensure that taxpayer dollars are utilized to help families and individuals who are truly in need of support.

### Examples of fraud:

- Falsely reporting that a parent is absent from the household
- Falsely reporting that a child is in the household
- Intentionally failing to report a change in the household composition
- Intentionally failing to report earnings from employment

- Intentionally failing to report monies from unemployment, disability and social security
- Intentionally failing to disclose bank accounts
- Intentionally failing to disclose marital status

In 2014 DSS fraud investigators uncovered over \$28 Million in recipient and provider fraud, waste and abuse. This includes \$561,498.16 in restitution from the DA's office; \$7,104,329.04 from liens and recoveries and \$20,376,576 in cost avoidance. Since January 2011, Nassau taxpayers have been spared a total of \$52.4 Million in Welfare Fraud and Abuse. \$2.6 Million in Criminal Fraud has been detected, referred, and recovered through the District Attorney's Office in the last three years.

Office of Investigations joined with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) whereby fugitives with Felony warrants who receive SNAP (Food Stamps) can have their benefits terminated as well as face arrest, further protecting taxpayer's money and removing felons from the streets.



December 29, 2014  
**MANGANO ANNOUNCES NASSAU'S MOST SUCCESSFUL YEAR EVER  
 IN ROOTING OUT WELFARE WASTE, FRAUD AND ABUSE**  
 \$28 million identified in Social Services savings for 2014;  
 Highest 1-Year Annual Total to Date  
 Since January 2011, Nassau taxpayers have been spared a total of  
 \$52.4 Million in Welfare Fraud and Abuse

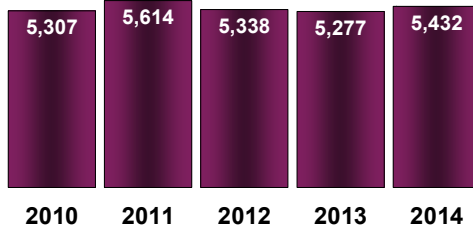


## X. Public Assistance

### Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Family Assistance

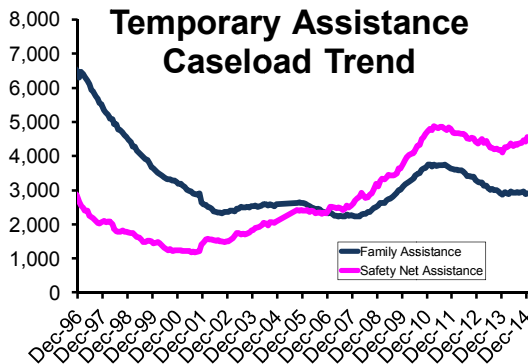
is a federal program administered by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Nassau County is the local district that provides cash assistance to needy families in Nassau that include a minor child living with a parent (including families where both parents are in the household) or a caretaker relative. Family Assistance operates under federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) guidelines. Under TANF, eligible adults are limited to

#### Family Assistance Applications



receiving benefits for a total of 60 months in their lifetime, including months of

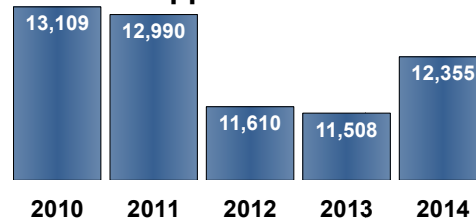
TANF-funded assistance granted in other states. Once the five year limit is reached, the household is ineligible to receive any more TANF benefits which in part explains the increases in Safety Net Assistance in New York State (see SNA). The months need not be consecutive, but rather each individual month in which TANF-funded benefits are received is included in the lifetime count. The



counting of this 60-month limit began in December, 1996. Parents and other adult relatives who can work must be working or involved in work-like activities after receiving family assistance benefits for two years, or sooner if the local department of social services decides they can work earlier.

**Safety Net Assistance (SNA)** was established under the New York State Welfare Reform Act of 1997 to replace the Home Relief program. This program provides assistance to individuals and families who either do not qualify for the federal TANF program or whose TANF benefits have run out. Benefits are provided as cash for 24 months. After 24 months benefits may continue as non-cash payment (vouchers or payments are made directly to vendors).

#### Safety Net Assistance Applications



Those who are not eligible for other assistance programs may be eligible for SNA, including:

- Single adults
- Childless couples
- Children living apart from any adult relative
- Families of persons abusing drugs or alcohol
- Families of persons refusing drug/alcohol screening, assessment or treatment
- Persons who have exceeded the 60-month TANF limit on assistance
- Individuals and families who are eligible for temporary assistance, but who are not eligible for federal reimbursement



## Other Public Assistance Programs Include:

**Emergency Assistance to Adults (EAA)** provides assistance to individuals in receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) who are facing emergency situations such as homelessness, utility or fuel emergencies or other items of need.

**Emergency Assistance to Families (EAF)** provides assistance to families to meet emergency situations that are sudden, not foreseen and beyond their control. Such needs may include but are not limited to, homelessness, fuel needs and utility shut off. The household must include a minor child who is without immediately accessible resources to meet their needs.

**Emergency Safety Net Assistance (E-SNA)** provides assistance to persons not eligible for recurring public assistance benefits, EAA or EAF. The individual or family must present an emergency need and be without immediately available income or resources to meet the emergency. The income standard for E-SNA is 125% of the Federal Income Poverty Line.



**Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** is a federally funded program designed to help low-income households meet the high cost of home energy. Both those who pay separately for heating costs and households whose heat is included in their rent may be eligible for a one time regular benefit. Additionally, households with a heating emergency may also be eligible for an emergency benefit and and/or a Heating Equipment Repair/Replacement (HERR) benefit. The HEAP year generally begins in mid-November and closes in mid-March or when the program funding is exhausted. A cooling component that assists medically needy households with the purchase of air conditioners may also be available during the warmer months. Most benefits are paid directly to the heating/utility vendor. Applications for regular HEAP may be submitted online through myBenefits.ny.gov.



## 2014 Highlights

In 2014 a new Temporary Assistance New Applications Unit was created and designed to improve the client experience by streamlining the application process. In addition to building a new applications reception area in the lobby (see section VII regarding the lobby), a Chief Welfare Examiner was assigned to manage the new area and many new workflow processes were introduced to make applying for Temporary Assistance more efficient for Nassau residents.



## XI. SNAP (formally Food Stamps)

SNAP benefits help low-income households by supplementing their monthly food budget. Eligible households use an electronic benefit card and PIN (personal ID number) to access their benefits at the supermarket checkout counter the same way a debit card is used.



There are many supermarkets throughout Nassau County where clients can use their benefit card. Many TANF and SNA recipients receive Food Stamps as part of their overall public assistance grant.



## 2014 Highlights

### Non-Public Assistance SNAP Applications

2010	18,492
2011	21,549
2012	22,256
2013	22,475
2014	23,120

- Nassau residents applying for Food Stamps only (not applying for Public Assistance) increased by over 25% since 2010.
- With continued quality improvement, the SNAP program area improved the timeliness of processing new applications. In 2014 over 98% of SNAP applications were processed within the 30 days required by Federal regulation.



## XII. Housing and Homeless Prevention

Housing and Homeless Prevention is coordinated by DSS and the Nassau County Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD). It works to:

- Assist individuals and families that are homeless or threatened with the loss of stable housing
- Provide emergency shelter
- Move people as quickly as possible to transitional and permanent housing

The SPOT (Shelter Placement Online Tracking) software program continues to manage almost all emergency housing needs. The SPOT system works as a “reservation” system for all emergency shelter placements (motels and shelters) so when clients are placed in emergency housing DSS knows what shelters/motels are available and the type(s) of accommodations offered. It allows the department to keep better track of all our emergency shelter assets to better plan for future needs.

### Homeless Re-stabilization Project

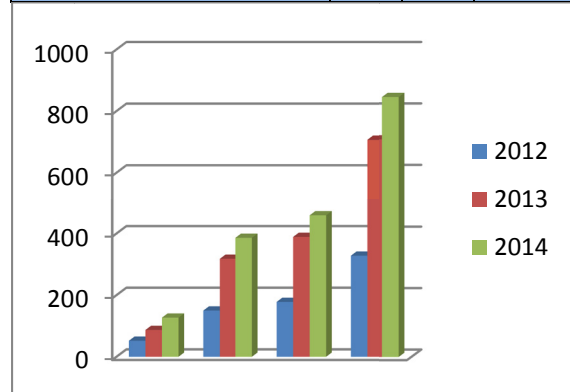
The Emergency Housing unit of The Office of Housing and Community Development along with DSS continues to prioritize and oversee the “Homeless Re-Stabilization Project” which is an on-going effort to take clients out of

homelessness and in to long-term stable housing.

### Emergency Housing - DSS/OHCD

#### Homeless Re-stabilization Project Comparison Chart

Total	2012	2013	2014
<b>Number of families</b>	52	87	127
<b>Number of family members</b>	150	318	386
<b>Number of singles</b>	178	389	459
<b>Number of individuals</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>845</b>



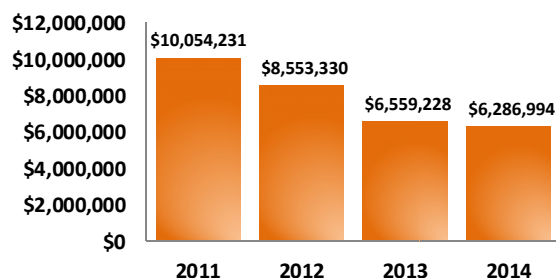
Through this project 459 single adults and 127 families with 386 members were moved out from emergency housing into permanent housing in 2014. In addition to providing a stable living situation for those in an emergency shelter, the restabilization project also saves the county about \$2,000 monthly for each single homeless adult and \$4,200 monthly for each homeless family in emergency housing costs.

### Other Notable Emergency Housing Accomplishments in 2014:

- The department has saved millions of dollars in expenses over the past several years by using technology to monitor and track emergency housing placements,

reducing motel fees and revising shelter rates. Since 2011 the department has reduced emergency housing expenses by 40%.

### Emergency Housing Expense

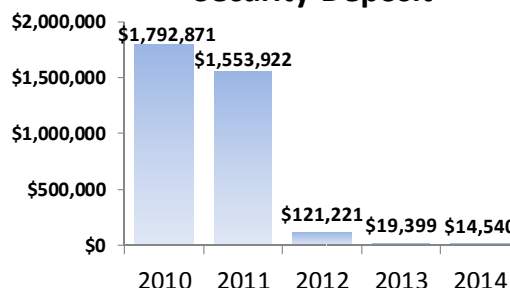




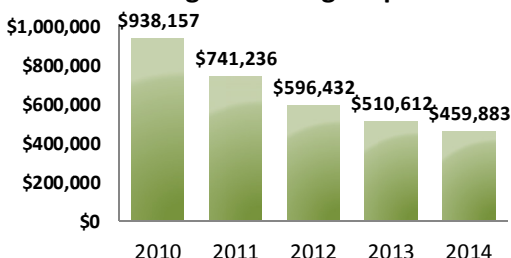
- The department decreased expenditures on cash security deposits by 99% since 2010 by implementing a security agreement for clients seeking housing. Under the security agreement landlords are issued a surety for security deposits instead of issuing a cash security deposit. With the surety agreement landlords can claim up to two months' rent for damages and unpaid rent once the tenant vacates the property. In 2010 DSS spent \$1.86 Million in cash security deposits and in 2014 this amount was reduced to just under \$15,000.

- Emergency Housing coordinated with various veteran agencies to find the appropriate services for the homeless veterans and facilitated their movement to permanent housing.

### Security Deposit



### Moving and Storage Expense



- Moving and storage costs are incurred when a client's housing becomes an issue (eviction, moving, etc.). The agency reduced moving and storage costs by over 50% since 2010 by implementing guidelines for establishing the costs for moving and storage.
- Clients with income are required to contribute towards their emergency shelter costs. Close monitoring by DSS and OHCD of homeless clients with income has increased the collection over the years by 96% since 2010.



- Increased coordination between Emergency Housing and other inter-county departments such as FEGS, CPS, APS, ARC, Drug and Alcohol, etc. resulted in providing clients with necessary assistance in an expeditious manner.
- New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA) Conference: The Deputy Director of Emergency Housing and Director of Planning and Research participated in a panel presentation along with Albany County at NYPWA Conference in Saratoga in July. The presentation highlighted the increased movement of homeless singles and families to permanent housing by utilizing technology, developing emergency housing policies that encourage finding permanent housing and working together with clients as well as collaborating with inter-county departments, emergency shelter providers and other outside agencies.

### Emergency Housing - DSS/OHCD

#### Client contribution towards shelter costs

2010	\$52,272
2011	\$128,351
2012	\$146,210
2013	\$135,146
2014	\$102,261



### XIII. Employment

Federal and State welfare reform legislation mandate that all employable individuals on public assistance engage in one or more work activities:

- Job Search
- Work Experience
- Employment
- Vocational Education
- Community Service



Nassau County DSS's Employment Unit administers the work activities.

The Employment Unit is composed of four areas:

1. Family Assistance (FA) - The FA staff provide supportive services to single parents to engage in work activities. They also sanction those clients who are non-compliant. There are two vendors EOC and NADAP who assess and case manage FA clients. A third vendor FEGs enrolls both FA clients and single individuals (SNA) into work experience.



2. Safety Net (SNA) – The SNA Unit provides supportive services for single individuals and two parent families to engage in work activities. They also sanction non-compliant clients which can lead to full case closures.
3. Job Development – The Job Developers conduct weekly job search classes and assist individuals to obtain employment. They conduct a series of JRT workshops to prepare individuals for job fairs. The Job Developers and JRT staff play an integral role in the job fair.

4. Conciliation/Fair Hearing - EAC provides administrative support for the Conciliation process for those clients who are non-compliant. Employment staff participates in both the conciliation process and Fair Hearings. The Fair Hearing unit has an impressive record of being affirmed in 95% of the decisions which result in employment and benefit sanctions.

The Nassau County Department of Social Services Employment Unit helps public assistance recipients obtain employment, job counseling and employment related training. The DSS

Employment Unit provides a direct service to local employers by conducting pre-employment activities such as client assessments and employee screening. Employers who hire DSS clients are eligible for tax credits.



To accommodate the needs of our clientele and to address current state and federal program mandates, the Employment Unit continues to have performance based contracts with three community based organizations that provide various employment related services to the TANF and Safety Net population and enroll them in various work activities. The use of performance based contracts has improved the overall performance of the Employment Unit.

2014 was indeed a busy and productive year for the Employment Unit!



## 2014 Highlights

### Employment

- The DSS Employment Unit had a busy and productive year. There was a regional meeting on February 28 among Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties to discuss best practices and common issues. The meeting was hosted by Nassau County at the Chelsea Mansion in East Norwich, NY and the three counties continue to meet regularly on a quarterly basis.
- The Job Development Unit holds daily groups for supervised job search. The following companies were recruited to meet with the clients and talk about their employment openings:
  1. Citibank
  2. Strathmore Who's Who
  3. NICE Bus Company
  4. RICOH
  5. New York Life
  6. Stericycle
  7. All Team Staffing
  8. Marriott Hotel
- Citibank in particular conducted workshops on J.R.T. and mentored clients which resulted in a number of the clients obtaining employment at Citibank. Stericycle had a recruiter travel from Maine to meet with our clients about customer service positions for a call center in Wantagh. They also piloted a Work From Home program.
- The Employment Unit has expanded its scope to work with veterans and ex-offenders.
- There was a Re-Entry job fair held on May 2nd and November 6th for people with legal issues. It was hosted by the following agencies: Re-Entry, DSS, Parole, EAC and the DA's office. The job fairs had over one hundred job seekers and 20 companies which resulted in several people obtaining employment. Due to the success of the job fairs NYS Dept. of Parole installed computers in the Parole office for ex-offenders to look up job openings based on zip code.
- The Employment Unit is also working with veterans to help them obtain employment. They are given preference in their job searches. A Veteran Employment Task Force was formed with the purpose of addressing veteran employment issues. Outreach was done at the local community



college and DSS attended Veteran Stand Downs in Hempstead and Freeport.

- Nassau County IDA (Industrial Development Agency) and the Employment Unit at DSS have worked collaboratively to identify employment needs for new companies seeking to relocate in Nassau County. When a company identifies openings, they contact Nassau IDA which in turn alerts DSS with job descriptions and number of openings. DSS then advertises the job openings with our clients as well as vendor staff.
- DSS hosted a series of workshops to prepare people for the County Executive's Mega Job Fair, in collaboration with CASA, staffing agencies, the Nassau County Veterans Services Agency and NS/LIJ Hospital. Some of the topics discussed were resume preparation, interview strategies, networking and effective use of social media.

### Safety Net & WEP Programs

- 1,134 entries to Employment
- 2,538 referrals were made to Work Experience Program
- 24 new Work Experience Program sites were developed
- There were 388 placements in vocational and educational training programs
- Two new WEP sites were developed in January and three new WEP sites were developed in December.

### Family Assistance

- The year 2014 was a very busy year in the FA Employment Unit. The employment staff worked on state audits and practice audits for the entire year. The practice audits are tools used to reduce the amount of errors thereby improving the Department's performance on state audits. As a result there were less errors on the state audits.
- The FA Employment staff worked on case maintenance throughout the year and continues to meet our goal of 40% participation
- The FA employment unit staff is always thinking "outside of the box" for meeting our participation goals and started two new projects: The Work Number Project and the Long Term Sanction Project. The Work



- The FA employment staff continually prepares cases for fair hearings. They gather pertinent information for the DSS fair hearing representative to present cases on behalf of DSS. The FA employment staff prepares cases for conciliations.
- The FA employment staff works closely with contracted Vendors NADAP, EOC and FECS whose mission it is to place clients in employment activities. The FA employment staff provides supportive services including childcare, transportation and clothing allowances so the client can participate in employment activities.
- The FA employment strives all year to assist clients in becoming productive and self-sufficient members of society.

**DCAP**

The DCAP process identifies people receiving benefits in Nassau who are disabled and eligible to received disability benefits from the Social Security Administration. This process represents significant savings to Nassau taxpayers.

- \$972,966.00 in Federal Interim Assistance Reimbursement received year-to-date.
- 457 requests for Aid to Disabled Category were received from medical directors of which 363 were approved.
- In 2014 195 DCAP referrals for SSI/SSD were received. 145 of these SSI/SSD applications were sent to the Social Security Administration. SSI/SSD was approved for 91 of these applications.

**Behavioral Health Unit**

- The Behavioral Health Unit employs Credentialed Alcohol And Substance Abuse Counselors (CASAC's) to conduct drug and alcohol assessments of Temporary Assistance applicants as part of the employability process.
- Clients in need of drug and alcohol treatment are referred to NYS OASAS (New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services) licensed treatment programs under a DSS treatment mandate.
- Clients in need of treatment are deemed either employable with treatment as part of their employment plan or temporarily unemployable. The employment unit monitors the treatment of those found employable. DCAP and Behavioral Health monitor those found unemployable until they become employable.
- The Behavioral Health Unit CASAC's all hold advanced degrees and licensure beyond the CASAC designation.
- For calendar year 2014, the Behavioral Health Unit screened 722 clients who did not require further assessment or did not require treatment. The unit assessed 1793 clients who were sent to treatment. Of those requiring treatment, 263 were sent inpatient and 1530 were sent to outpatient treatment.
- In 2014, the Behavioral Health Unit was merged with the Employment Unit to gain greater efficiency in the employment process.



#### XIV. Employment Job Fair

On October 7, DSS, CE's office, Minority Affairs, CASA and Veterans Services Agency hosted the County Executive's 7th Mega Job Fair at the Nassau Veteran's Memorial Coliseum in Uniondale. Over 8,000 people and 350 companies attended the Job Fair. DSS Volunteer Services was also present with their Dress to Impress room, providing appropriate interview clothes for job seekers. There also were computers to help veteran applicants with their resumes or to assist applying for jobs on-line. The veterans had a special time from 9AM – 10AM to interview with employers before the general visitors were admitted. A record 400 veterans attended the job fair! Surveys have been sent out to provide feedback and we are in the process of receiving and evaluating them to determine how many job seekers actually obtained employment as a direct result of the Job Fair.



Nassau County Executive **ED MANGANO** invites you to a

# MEGA JOB FAIR October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014

**Veterans Admission starts at 9:00am**

**General Admission 10:00am-2:00pm**

at the

## Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum

1255 Hempstead Turnpike • Uniondale

**FREE PARKING & ADMISSION**

**C.A.S.A. 516-572-0750**

**Department of Social Services 516-227-8656**



NASSAU COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**ED MANGANO**

[www.nassaucountyny.gov](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov)



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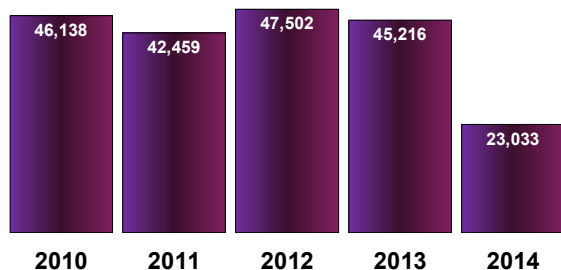
*"I just wanted to share how happy I was with the organization and execution of the Job Fair last week! We had a ton of potential candidates and will actually start interviews on Tuesday. I'm confident we will offer both salaried leaders and hourly supervisor positions next week. That is possible because of the job fair, so thank you and we look forward to next year." HR Department – Large National Department Store Chain*



## xv. Medical Assistance

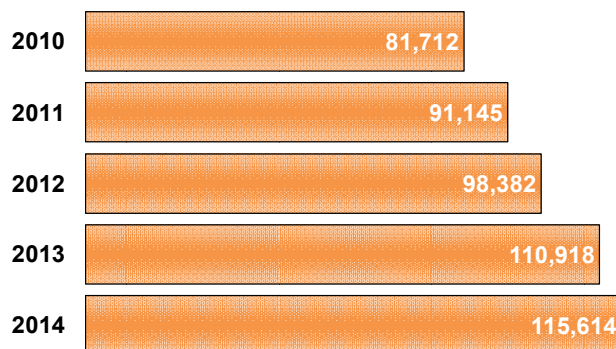
Medicaid (MA) provides assistance to Nassau County residents who do not have the means to pay for medical care. Individuals who are eligible include those in receipt of SSI (Supplemental Security Income), Public Assistance and those who meet New York State's eligibility criteria.

### **Medicaid Applications**



In 2014, the number of MA (Medicaid) applications decreased by 46%. This is attributable to the state takeover of several types of MA applications. Although the state has taken responsibility for some MA application types they have yet to take over the undercare (case maintenance) responsibility for these types that already exist. As a result while applications handled in Nassau have decreased, the number of cases maintained by Nassau continues to increase. In 2014, the MA caseload increased by 4%.

### **Medicaid Average Monthly Caseload**



At the end of 2014 the department carried a caseload of 119,570 Medicaid cases insuring 184,066 individuals, or 14% of Nassau County's total population.

In October of 2013 the State began the takeover of processing Medicaid applications as part of the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care). The state planned to fully take over a large proportion of the Medicaid cases in 2014. An additional change due to the Affordable Care Act is that the Family Health Plus Medicaid program ended in 2014.

Medicaid Pays for the Following:

- In-Patient Care in Hospitals
- Out-Patient Care at Hospitals
- Physician Services
- Clinic Services
- Pharmacy
- Skilled Nursing Home Care
- Long Term Home Health Care
- Personal Care Aides
- Child Teen Health Program
- Mental Health
- Family Planning
- Medical and Health Insurance Premium
- Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
- Assisted Living Program

### **2014 Highlights**

Unfortunately, NYS DOH (Department of Health) did not meet its time commitments to take over Medicaid Undercare cases in 2014. As a result no undercare cases were taken over in 2014 as promised. In anticipation of the state takeover, staffing levels were reduced in 2014 leaving the remaining staff with larger caseloads to manage.



## XVI. Children's Services

# Children & Families

Children and Family Services are comprised of two main operating units; Child Protective Services and Services to Children. Children and Family Services have three primary functions: 1) Investigative and Protective Services for Children, 2) Preventive and Rehabilitative Services, and 3) Support Services. Children and Family Services operate under the authority of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

### 2014 Highlights

#### *Mobile Technology*

In 2014, all on-call staff and field staff in APS, CS and CPS received iPads in order to improve services to children, families and adults. Now, all field staff can remotely access their case records and securely pull up information without having to physically be in the office. Local applications have been created and added to each device which further enables services staff to access data, allowing easier and faster communication with other DSS workers as well as service providers.

#### *Disproportionate Minority Representation*

As one of five original New York State counties to apply for and be awarded a grant for a Disproportionate Minority Representation (DMR), DSS has continued to refine and enhance its DMR program. Staff from CPS and Services to Children participated in a OCFS Webinar in September 2014 entitled "Creating Better Outcomes for Child Welfare." This Webinar which was presented to all 57 NYS counties in a live broadcast (and recorded), explains how Nassau County developed its blind removal process, recognizing that Child Welfare staff may have unconscious as well as conscious biases when making decisions on removing children from their parents. The webinar link is:



<https://www.hslcnys.org/hslc/ssl/launch.htm?contentId=2290&personnelId=0&contentDirectory=../Content/DLT01/2290>

The "Make it Happen" event sponsored by the Casey Family Programs was held November 7, 2014, at the Yes We Can Community Center in Westbury. Engaging community leaders was a goal of this program. Three DMR communities (Westbury, Hempstead and West Hempstead) were invited to participate and encouraged to begin a dialogue with DSS Child Welfare. One by-product of this event is the opportunity for enhanced recruitment of foster/adoptive families from these three towns.

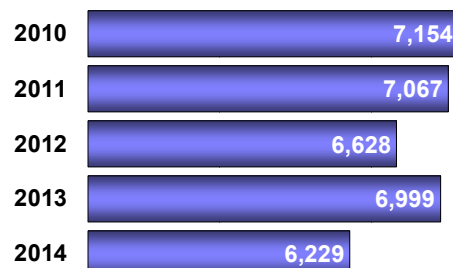
#### *Child Welfare Resiliency Training*

CPS and Services to Children in consultation with OCFS has begun to receive Trauma based Child Resiliency Training (Sanctuary Model). This model is a treatment of organizational change that integrates trauma theory with the creation of therapeutic communities which provides safety for both clients and staff.

#### *Child Protective Services*

Child Protective Services is responsible for investigating all allegations of child abuse and neglect received from the New York State Central Registry. In 2014, the average number of CPS reports received daily was 25, each requiring an

#### **Child Protective Services Annual Total Intakes (Reports)**



investigation. On average 76% of reports are unfounded – a figure which has changed little over the past few years.

#### Who Can Make a Report?

Anyone can make a report if they are suspicious that a child under 18 years of age is being neglected or abused. The source of the report is kept confidential and can be anonymous unless they are considered a mandated reporter who is required by law to report. 911 should always be called if a real emergency exists.

#### What Happens After a Report Is Made?

The investigation of a report begins within 24 hours and is a fact-finding process that includes interviewing, observing, and information gathering. Its purpose is to protect the child, determine the validity of the allegations, evaluate any condition of abuse or maltreatment that was not reported, and determine the services



necessary to ensure the protection of the child and reduce the degree of future risk to the child. The investigation includes a safety assessment of all children in the home, whether or not they are actually named in the report. The final step in an investigation is the determination of whether the report is "indicated" or "unfounded". If some credible evidence of abuse or maltreatment exists, the report is indicated and the family is offered appropriate services. If no credible evidence of abuse or maltreatment is found, the report is unfounded and sealed. The final determination must be made within 60 days.

Allegations fall into the following four categories below:

1. **Physical abuse** takes place when a child is hit, punched slapped, whipped, beaten or burned and injuries such as abrasions, bruises, lacerations, bleeding, burns, or

fractures occur. The physical injury is not accidental and it causes or creates a



substantial risk of death, or serious or protracted disfigurement or protracted impairment of physical or emotional health or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ.

2. **Neglect** takes place when a parent who is financially able, or offered financial means or other means to meet a child's health and safety needs, does not provide basic care such as food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care, medication, or adequate supervision.
3. **Sexual abuse** takes place when a child is touched by a parent or caretaker for the purpose of gratifying sexual desire; when the child is encouraged or forced to touch the parent or caretaker for the purpose of gratifying sexual desire; when a child is engaged or attempted to be engaged in sexual intercourse or deviant sexual intercourse; forced or encouraged to engage in sexual activity with other children or adults; exposed to sexual activity or exhibitionism for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of another; permitted to engage in sexual activity which is not developmentally



appropriate and results in the emotional impairment of the child; or used in a sexual performance such as a photograph or video tape.

4. **Emotional abuse** takes place when a parent or caretaker's pattern of behavior has a harmful effect on the child's emotional health or well-being. The effect can be observed in the child's abnormal performance or behavior and there is substantial impairment in the child's ability to function normally due to the parent or caretaker's conduct. For example a child who is repeatedly isolated, frightened, embarrassed, belittled, or threatened manifests symptoms of impact such as aggressive or self-destructive behavior, inability to think and reason, inability to speak and use language appropriately, extreme passive behavior, extreme social withdrawal, psychosomatic symptoms, or severe anxiety. A mental health professional should assess the child to determine that the child's impairment is causally linked to the acts or omissions of the parent or caretaker.

Nassau County receives and investigates reports of abuse or maltreatment 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The New York State Central Registry transmits all reports to the Nassau Child Protective Services Program Office located at 60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Uniondale, NY daily between the hours of 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM. After 6 pm, reports are received through our Emergency Services unit.



## 2014 Highlights

### **Family Assessment Response (FAR)**

October 2014 marks two years since Nassau County launched its initial FAR (Family Assessment Response) Units. In 2014, the FAR units averaged engaging with 200 families per month. A third FAR unit was created in 2014, further reducing the number of families involved with traditional CPS investigations.

When Nassau County receives a report from the State Central Registry regarding child safety concerns, a decision is made to either initiate a traditional CPS investigation or engage the family in a Family Assessment Response. The decision is based upon stated guidelines, and the families' willingness to engage in services.

### **Reporting Child Abuse**

**To report Child Abuse or Neglect Call:  
1800-342-3720**

**Mandated Reporters Should Call  
1800-635-1522**

**After Hours 6 PM to 8 AM, and 24 Hrs  
on Weekends and Holidays  
516-573-8626**

**For information about reporting child  
abuse and neglect please call  
516-227-8133**

FAR does not focus on the incident with allegations of Abuse or Neglect, but rather focuses on engaging the families as partners to help identify and work through the concerns which have been identified. The goals of FAR are:

1. *Help keep children safe*
2. *Empower Families*
3. *Provide needed services*
4. *Help families to identify their strengths*
5. *Reduce the number of cases coming into CPS*
6. *Reduce the recidivism of cases into the system*

In November of 2014 an analysis was completed of FAR Family experiences and overall feedback has been positive.

### **Family Engagement**

When CPS believes there is a family problem or issue that may or may not have the potential to lead to a removal of one or more children, the worker engages the family and available resources for a Family Meeting. The meeting is to discuss alternatives to placing children into Foster Care, to secure other resources and develop plans to help stabilize the immediate crises in the family. The goal is to empower families, keeping children safe and reducing the number of Foster Care placements. In 2014, over 757 Child Protective Services (CPS)



investigations were diverted to the FAR (Family Assessment Response) program saving investigative and legal resources as well as eliminating a formal CPS investigation.

### **BASSICS**

CPS and Services to Children participated in a pilot project from the State BASSICS (Building a Sustainable Support System in Child Welfare Supervision). The model is geared to provide staff with the necessary skills needed to perform their job from a framework of support, education and guidance. Although the pilot project has ended for the BASSICS program, CPS and Services to Children continues to be committed to practicing the BASSICS Model of formal one-on-one supervision with the staff along with regularly scheduled meetings.



### **Drafting of Court Petitions**

Within the last year, CPS, Services to Children and Legal worked with the Family Court Bureau to develop protocols and procedures so that the Family Court Bureau's Deputy County Attorneys (DCA) writes petitions for DSS. The DCA's are available for consultation and work with DSS staff to draft legally sufficient petitions for court. This has resulted in greater efficiencies as staff and the DCA's are able to meet in person to address cases requiring Family Court involvement.



### **Substance Abuse Mental Health Evaluator**

In April, 2014 CPS was able to secure a contract to rehire a Substance Abuse/Mental Health Evaluator. This person is able to go out into the field with caseworkers to complete substance abuse testing and mental health assessments. The evaluator has been able to assist with case planning.

### **Parenting Group**

This year, several caseworkers who have their LMSW (Licensed Master of Social Work) came together under the supervision of the CPS Director to enhance their knowledge and clinical

skills for professional growth in the field of social work; while working towards their (Licensed Clinical Social Worker) certification. This group has developed a 10-12 week parenting skills program for clients in receipt of Child Protective Services and or Services to Children (Partners in Parenting). This is a first for DSS whereby the clients are learning and engaging with their caseworkers in a partnership.

### **Training Units**

This past year CPS was able to hire 16 trainees for caseworker positions. The training period will end at the beginning of 2015. The workers will gain confidence and experience prior to being transferred into other units.

### **Safe Harbour Project**

Nassau County established the Safe Harbour Project through funds received through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. The project was established to address the needs of sexually exploited children in the Child Welfare System and to provide short term safe placement, crisis intervention and other appropriate services as needed.

A sexually exploited child refers to any person under the age of 18 who has been subject to sexual exploitation because he or she is a victim of sexual trafficking or the crime of compelling prostitution.

As Human Trafficking is a relatively new and emerging issue, emphasis is being made to raise public awareness in the community and amongst social service providers, schools, legal, law enforcement, medical professionals and county residents. The Department is also aware that social service and mental health providers may not be adequately trained to respond to child victims of trafficking and may not have established policies and protocols to serve the population appropriately. Resources may not be well coordinated. In order to meet the needs of this population, we set out to:

1. Identify commercially sexually exploited youth
2. Train staff and contract agencies
3. Educate the public
4. Establish a central point for referrals and service delivery



## Services to Children

Services to Children (also referred to as Children's Services), is responsible for several service areas including Preventive Services, and Adoption Services.

### Preventive Services

#### Support Services.

Concrete services (i.e.: day care, homemaking, budgeting, advocacy, etc.), casework counseling and referral services are provided to



eligible families by contracted agencies in order to avert placements of children outside their homes, enhance family functioning and/or expedite reunification of children in care with their biological families. Eligible families include those at some risk of foster care and pregnant and/or parenting adolescents.

#### PINS (Persons In Need of Supervision)

**Diversion Program.** Services are provided to families in crisis, through contract agencies, whose children might be experiencing truancy, gang involvement, running away from home and substance abuse issues in order to prevent/avert the filing of a PINS Petition and placement outside the home.

Phone number for Information and Intake: **516 – 227-8404**

### Foster Care Services

#### Foster and Adoptive Resource Development.

The staff in this unit recruits, trains, studies, approves/certifies, develops, retains, and re-approves/re-certifies foster and adoptive families. To inquire about becoming a foster and/or adoptive parent, please call **516 – 227-8284**.

**Foster Care.** Children enter foster care mainly through Child Protective Services via a Family Court order. The foster care units work intensively with the children and their foster parents to stabilize the placements, to assure that all of the children's needs are being met, and to



establish productive birth-parent/child visits. These units also extend immediate concrete, casework counseling and referral services directly to birth parents

in an attempt to reunite them as soon as possible with their children and to lessen the time the children spend in foster care. Those children and families not reunited quickly, despite intensive efforts, receive continued concrete, casework counseling, and referral services as long as extended foster care is necessary. Ultimately, these units effect the safe reunification of children with their birth families, free for adoption children who cannot be safely returned to their birth families, or refer older teens for Independent Living services where neither reunification nor adoption are possible. These older teens are provided with opportunities to develop independent living skills with emphasis on education and/or vocation and to establish permanent family connections.

#### PINS Placement (Persons In Need of Supervision).

This unit coordinates contracted agencies' foster



home, group home, and residential treatment center services for court placed PINS youngsters who require residential services and/or therapeutic foster care due to their higher levels of needs and/or asocial behaviors.

**Review and Support.** This unit determines eligibility for cases and periodically reviews case documents to insure compliance with laws, regulations and mandates. Staff also coordinates Service Plan Review and Permanency Planning Review conferences and monitor youngsters placed for diagnostic evaluations. This unit manages and oversees all audits and reviews of Children & Family Services cases and coordinates NYSOCFS Connections system for Nassau County.

**Institutional Liaison.** This Unit acts as liaison to contract agencies that provide placement services to Nassau County foster children, making referrals and visiting the facilities to insure appropriate care is provided to Nassau County children. The unit monitors contract compliance, reviews contracts for accuracy, facilitates new contracts when needed, and



records and tracks any reports of institutional abuse involving Nassau County foster children. The unit also monitors Nassau County children, in NYSOCFS custody, who were placed in group homes and residential treatment centers as Juvenile Delinquents.

### Adoption Services

**Adoption.** Casework counseling, referral, and concrete services are provided directly to children freed for adoption and their foster and/or adoptive families until adoptions are legalized. This unit effects adoption subsidies where appropriate and



prepares the documentation required for the legalization process. Direct and referral services are provided to match children with adoptive families in cases where the foster family is not adopting, to maintain the Prospective Adoptive Parent's Registry, to register freed children with the NYSAS Adoption Registry and with Children Awaiting Parents (CAP) Book, to administer the Subsidized Adoption Program, to respond to the Adoption Information Registry and to handle post-legalization issues.

**Babies Can't Wait.** In a collaborative effort known as Babies Can't Wait (formerly The Right Start for Babies) Services to Children works with Nassau County Family Court and the Adelphi University Institute for Parenting to provide services to the 0-5 year old foster care population and their offending parent. The initiative is a trauma focused developmentally informed program that provides intensive Mental Health Treatment to the maltreated 0-5 foster care population and their offending parent, in order to heal the damage caused by the abuse/neglect. The main purpose is to



achieve expedited safe and lasting permanency, reduce re-entry rates and reduce, or eliminate when possible, the moves of very young children from home to home while in foster care. Both Nassau County DSS and Nassau County Family Court have restructured their existing programs to provide a dedicated neglect/abuse judge and a dedicated 0-5 Foster Care Unit.

**Family Engagement.** Children's Services participates in the Family Engagement initiative through Family Meetings which are held with the birth families within 5 days of placement into foster care. The birth parents and those individuals that they identify as supports are



invited to the Department by the Family Engagement Specialist (FES). This invitation comes about via a home visit to the birth parent by the FES. The FES provides Metro Cards for the participants that are willing to come to the Family Meeting and has also transported birth parents to DSS when public transportation is unavailable. Children's Services is measuring the length of time toward permanency with the goals of return to parent, discharge to a fit and willing relative and adoption, to measure the success of Family Meetings as a tool to achieve expedited permanency.

### Innovations in Family Recruitment Grant.

Nassau County DSS Children's Services Foster & Adoptive and Homefinding Units joined with NYSOCFS in their application for a federal grant for the recruitment of foster parents. OCFS was granted the Innovations in Family Recruitment Grant award in October 2013 and as partners with OCFS, Nassau gets assistance throughout the 5 years of the grant. The federal grant monies are intended for two phases. In the first phase, OCFS plans to develop a blue print which will include a systematic process for gathering and assessing data about the recruitment in Nassau



County, to then develop strategies to address the challenges. In the second phase, the strategies will be implemented and reviewed for effectiveness. The hope is that materials will be developed that can be used in Nassau and then throughout NYS. During the collaborative planning of the grant application, OCFS stated that Nassau County will have a recruitment consultant, described as a Permanency Specialist by OCFS, at our disposal for approximately 80% of the time in years one and two, 60 % in year three and then lowered again over the last two years of the grant.

## 2014 Highlights

### ***Babies Can't Wait***

Babies Can't Wait (BCW): currently we are tracking **14** cases. The BCW Court Team, including the Director of Children's Services, presented the Nassau County 0-5 BCW program at the Court Improvement Project's Program: Child Safety and Risk, Exploring Decision Making in Child Welfare Training and Regional Meeting, on November 18th-19th, at The Desmond Hotel and Conference Center, Albany N.Y.

### ***Educational Stability***

The purpose of the Educational Stability initiative is to provide better educational outcomes for children in foster care by limiting disruptions and multiple moves of children among school districts. As a pilot county for NYSOCFS, Nassau County DSS is at the forefront of the Educational Stability Initiative in New York State. Ongoing meetings are held with BOCES principals and the BOCES Superintendent, as well as with various school district principals from around Nassau County. These meetings have been attended by Family Court Judge Robin Kent, NYSOCFS Assistant Commissioner Lisa Gharthey-Ogundimu, the Children's Services Director and an Assistant



Director, as well as by the Social Services Program Coordinator. Social Services Program Coordinator, with Judge Kent and Assistant Commissioner Gharthey-Ogundimu went to **Philadelphia in November 2014** for an Education Stability Conference. Casey Family Programs hosted Endless Dreams training in January 2015 for Nassau County School District personnel.

### ***Innovations in Family Recruitment Grant***

Nassau County DSS continues to partner with NYSOCFS on the Federal Diligent Recruitment Grant. **WRI and Child Trends conducted Focus Meetings with Children's Services staff and foster parents on 12/10/14-12/12/14, at Nassau County DSS.**

### ***National Adoption Day***

Nassau County DSS participated in a **Mini Adoption Day at Nassau County Family Court on November 21, 2014. Three children's adoptions were finalized by Judge Edmund Dane, Supervising Judge of the Nassau County Family Court**, with Commissioner Imhof and staff from Children's Services in attendance. Judge Dane **also performed the marriage of the adoptive parents who adopted two of the children immediately following their wedding ceremony.** Children's Services supplied refreshments for the families and their guests.





## XVIII. Adult Services

**Mission** - To assist vulnerable adults, 18 and over, in accordance with local, state and federal laws and regulations, who reside in the community and are at risk due to neglect, self-neglect, abuse and/or financial exploitation. We strive to reduce or remove those elements of risk that impede the individual's ability to meet their essential needs. We recognize the individual's right to self-determination and offer the least restrictive intervention as we carry out our mission.



Adult Protective Services (APS) accepts all referrals of adults over the age of 18 years, who are alleged to be abused, incapable of caring for



themselves because of a physical or mental incapacity, or neglected and/or financially

exploited by others and have no one willing or able to assist them responsibly. APS uses a case management approach to provide financial management, and refer for counseling, medical and other services (for example, Meals on Wheels and day programs). Services are provided free, without regard to one's income. Anyone making a referral to APS in good faith is protected from civil liability.

**Adult Preventive Services** provides help for those adults who demonstrate a need for assistance in managing their activities of daily living.



Services may include medical and/or psychiatric support services, and financial management services.

**Family-Type Homes for Adults** provides a family living situation for adults who need supervision and care. Caring people open their homes to adults that are mentally or physically impaired who do not require the skilled care of a nursing facility.

**Adult Financial Management Services** is available for adults who are not able to manage their finances. It ensures the proper use of a person's income and resources and prevents the mismanagement and financial exploitation of those funds by others.

**AIDS Services Coordinator** is responsible for ensuring that people who have been diagnosed as having HIV/AIDS receive all of the services and benefits for which they are entitled from DSS and the many public and private community based agencies.

**Post Institutional Services** program coordinates with the Department of Mental Health and New York State private psychiatric hospital units to ensure the proper discharge of patients into the community with the necessary social service support.

**Guardianship Program** In 2009 the Department of Social Services in collaboration with Nassau County Supreme Court, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, the Nassau County Bar Association Elder Law Committee and Department of Senior Citizen Affairs initiated



a County Guardianship Program for incapacitated adults who require court appointed guardians. Nassau County

Supreme Court appoints a guardian when it is determined that an adult is unable to provide for their personal needs and/or property management. The guardian's responsibilities can include arranging personal necessities such as food, clothing, shelter and health care. It can also include managing the property and financial affairs of the incapacitated person. If a person needing a guardian lacks sufficient assets to pay





guardianship fees and has no other responsible person available to serve in that role, a referral is made to DSS. DSS conducts an investigation and determines whether a services case can be opened. Based on the department's assessment, the court

makes a finding as to whether a DSS vendor can act as the guardian for the incapacitated individual. If so, one of two contracted vendors is appointed guardian and assists the incapacitated person to live comfortably and safely while maintaining as much independence as possible.

In 2014, APS filed 18 new adult guardianship petitions. There were 12 new appointments made during the calendar year. In total, 51 clients were served by Guardianship in our district. Throughout New York State, there are only 4 other counties who have a larger number of guardianship cases than Nassau (one of the four is New York City).

## 2014 Highlights

### *OCFS Recognition*

DSS staff was recognized by NYS OCFS for the State's case record review. OCFS's findings were published in May 2014 whereby the State concluded, "the examples of hard work, professionalism and commitment of APS staff in the field were evident." OCFS applauded APS for their timeliness, diligence, development and implementation of quality service plans for their clients.

### *IRRS, (Customer Service)*

In 2014, Information, Resource and Referral Services (IRRS), a Customer Service unit was transferred under APS. This unit offers a full

range of informational services to all residents of Nassau County. The services include referrals for: children's preventive, PINS (person in need of supervision) and Adult Services (protective and preventive). Anyone can call the number (this includes neighbors, family, the person themselves, community agencies, hospitals, schools, law enforcement, etc.) to obtain information and learn what services may be available within the County. Additionally, the unit can assist with referrals for crisis and emergency intervention which includes: child or elder abuse, domestic violence, employment, fuel services, homelessness, Medicaid and SNAP. Staff are available Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. The unit is designed to accept referrals over the phone.

### *Homeless Intervention Team (HIT)*

The Homeless Intervention Team (HIT) conducts homeless outreach throughout Nassau County on a regular basis with assistance from local, state and MTA police, as well as various non-profit agencies. People who notice homeless individuals in their communities can call IRRS and identify the location and time of day homeless were seen. HIT will go to these locations to try and engage the individuals. HIT evaluates the person's situation and history to determine whether they may be eligible for assistance through DSS, Mental Health Case Management, Housing, Veterans Affairs and Office of the Aging, OPWDD or non-profit agencies.

### *World Elder Abuse Awareness Day*

For the first time, DSS participated in World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 13, 2014 by wearing purple. APS initiated this awareness campaign by giving out wrist bands and educating staff and clients regarding the severity of Elder Abuse in every community.



## Child Support Enforcement

Child support services are available free of charge to any parent, guardian, or caretaker of a child for whom child support is needed. Filing for child support from non-custodial parents is part of the application process for Public Assistance and Medicaid. Applicants for or recipients of Public Assistance are automatically provided with support services unless otherwise indicated.



The Office of Child Support Enforcement (CSE) works to:

- Locate non-custodial parents.
- Establish paternity for children by assisting both parents with the signing of a voluntary acknowledgment of paternity or through family court by filing petitions to establish paternity. Genetic marker or DNA testing may also be used to aid in making a determination about paternity.
- Paternity. Obtain support orders from court, including provisions for health care coverage.
- Enforce unpaid child support: All individuals obligated to pay child support obligations

through the Office of Child Support Enforcement are subject to any and all enforcement measures available.

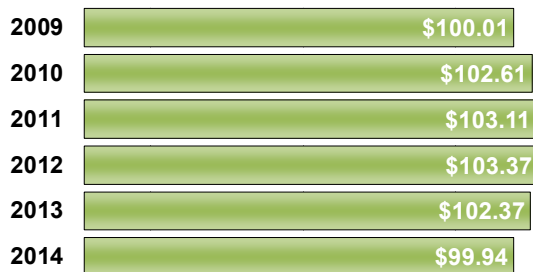
- Review support orders for increased support based on cost of living adjustments.
- Modify child support orders based on changes in circumstances.

The above services may be applied to orders originating in other states and countries.

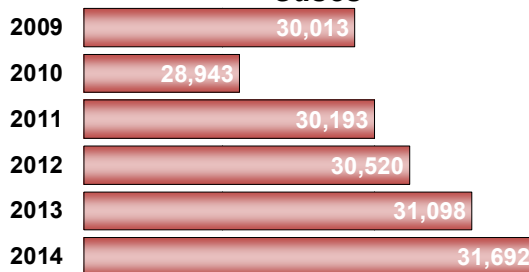
### 2014 Highlights

- Final implementation of the new Automated State Support Enforcement and Tracking System (ASSETS) as the portal for all child support applications (Statewide) and sole operating system for all NYS CSE.
- Nassau County Child Support Collections for 2014 totaled \$99,935,853.
- Nassau County Child Support Collections in 2014 are down 2.38% when compared to collections for 2013 of \$102,370,470.
- Over 2,400 petitions for child support were filed in 2014.
- Over 32,000 child support cases were open at the end of 2014 representing an increase of 2% from 2013.

**Child Support Enforcement  
Amount Collected (In Millions)**



**Child Support Enforcement  
Average Number of Open  
Cases**



## XIX. Day Care

DSS child care is provided to families on public assistance and working families in Nassau who meet income guidelines for subsidies. Various kinds of child care are available throughout Nassau County.

For 2014, the Child Care department continued to meet its mandate to expeditiously provide day care subsidies to working families. The average number of days between application registration and disposition consistently remained less than 30 days. Meeting the agency mandate to process applications within 30 days of application had a positive impact on the population served. Working families were able to access child care subsidies in a reasonable timeframe, allowing them to obtain and retain employment.



### Child Care Council of Nassau

The department works closely with the Child Care Council of Nassau and other non-profit community groups to help make day care available to working families in Nassau.



To obtain free child care resource and referral information from the Child Care Council of Nassau please contact them using one of the following:

By Telephone: 516-258-9288 or 516-358-9250 if you are a parent who needs free child care resources & referrals.

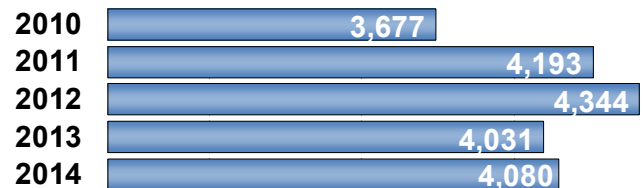
Or

If you want to find out about their other services.

By Email: [info@childcarenassau.org](mailto:info@childcarenassau.org)

By Fax: 516-358-9287

### Average Number of Child Care Cases



### Average Number of Children in Day Care





## XXI. Human Resources

### Overview

The Department of Social Services' HR Office staff carries out the day-to-day operations of a very active personnel office, and works on special projects as requested. DSS Human Resources Office assists Program Directors, Supervisors, and all department employees on a wide range of issues, questions & concerns pertaining to Human Resources related matters. DSS HR assists the department's supervisory staff with the administration of various programs & policies as they pertain to Human Resources. In addition to assisting employees with their questions and concerns, DSS HR processes various personnel actions and performs special projects as directed by DSS administration, and advises the Commissioner and his senior staff on the status of current HR issues & projects and the processing of approved personnel actions.

Below is a summary of some of the major initiatives & programs undertaken by DSS HR in calendar year 2014:

### Staffing

Total DSS staff headcount as of January 1st 2014 was 854, consisting of 789 Full-Time & 65 Part-Time employees. Headcount as of December 31, 2014 was 824, consisting of 767 Full-Time and 57 Part-Time employees. This represents a net headcount decrease of 30 positions during calendar year 2014.

In 2014, positions were filled across various job titles and assigned to various Program sections as needed, including Child Protective Services caseworker positions. The processing of new Caseworkers involved the requirements of securing fingerprint & background check clearances and state registry clearances as well as several other necessary civil service requirements.

### Transfers & Reorganization

Program Directors submit requests for changes in personnel staffing assignments and/or requests for additional staff. Staffing changes processed & implemented by the DSS HR Office have included individual employee transfers, restructuring & reorganization of work units, employee work schedule changes, and redeployment of supervisory staff when

possible, to best address each Program's staffing needs.

DSS HR office staff coordinated the personnel and payroll functions related to the implementation of the Temporary Assistance & Medicaid Reorganization Plan, which was effective as of January 15th 2014. The reorganization involved employee notifications, processing of employee transfers, and setting up new worker numbers & new units within these Programs in the appropriate departmental systems. The TA/MA reorganization involved new unit assignments for a significant number of DSS employees, including reassignment of some supervisory staff. During the month of February, the DSS HR office staff continued to process some additional employee transfers and/or work unit changes related to the implementation of the Reorganization Plan.

### VSIP

A total of 18 of the 32 DSS employees who submitted Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) paperwork to County HR in September 2014, ultimately decided to separate from County service. Many were approved for a deferred separation date of 12/31/14. In coordination with the Nassau County Office of Human Resources, DSS Human Resources staff processed the 18 VSIP separations.

### Employee Attendance

DSS Human Resources & Payroll Office assisted in a department review of employee attendance and/or lateness issues. Unacceptable patterns of poor attendance, excessive lateness, and/or abuse of the grace-paid period resulted in Notices of Personnel Actions (NOPAs) being issued. Employees who had demonstrated the most flagrant "Chronic Lateness" and/or "Abuse of the Grace-Paid Period" were served with a NOPA in 2014. Over 70% of the NOPAs issued were "Counseling Notice" NOPAs. It is anticipated that the employees who have received NOPAs will be taking immediate corrective action to significantly improve their timeliness in reporting to work and further progressive disciplinary action will not be required.

### Voluntary Furlough

The DSS HR Office processes employee requests to participate in the Nassau County Voluntary Furlough



Program. From the start of the Program through December 31st 2014, a total of (61) Voluntary Furlough Applications had been submitted; (38) of these applications were approved; (23) of the requests were denied.

### **PeopleSoft Training**

In October & December 2014, DSS Human Resources & Payroll staff attended a week-long training at 1 West St, in preparation for the County's implementation of the "Peoplesoft" Personnel/Payroll Program.

### **Policies & Procedures**

With the assistance of the Nassau County Office of Labor Relations and Nassau County Office of Human Resources, DSS HR Office prepared a comprehensive written Policy & Procedure: "Employee Medical Notes: Policies & Procedures" which was distributed to all DSS staff in 2014. The purpose of this effort was to provide employees with clarification on the subject matter, as well to serve as a comprehensive reference guide for all DSS employees. Employees were required to return an "Acknowledgement of Receipt" of these Policies & Procedures; the signed acknowledgements were placed in employees' personnel files.

In 2014, a formal procedure was put into place pertaining to reimbursement of funds for renewal of employee notary commissions. In accordance with Local-Law no. 7-1967, S22-2.6, if an employee is provided with reimbursement from County funds for their Notary Public Commission, they must agree to be placed on the department's "notary log" - to be called upon to notarize documents in the regular course of business for the Department of Social Services, and sign an acknowledgement of such.

DSS HR maintains the "notary log" for the Department.

### **CSEA Contract Implementation**

During June 2014, department HR offices were advised of further details pertaining to the implementation of CSEA contract changes & salary increases, made effective as of 4/1/14. DSS HR Office staff assisted department employees who called or visited the HR office with questions regarding the changes or inquiring regarding their updated annual salary placement.

### **"Road Show"**

At the invitation of DSS Program Directors, the supervisors of the DSS Human Resources Office, the Payroll Office, and the Staff Development Office attended Program Directors' regular monthly supervisor meetings, in order to discuss Human Resources/Payroll & Training issues. This series of "Road Show" meetings enables the major DSS support services to assist DSS supervisors and Directors in fostering better communication of policies & procedures, as well providing unit supervisors with a forum for open-discussion of general HR, Payroll, and Employee Training issues which are of immediate concern to the section supervisors. Issues found to be of common concern across various Program areas are being addressed appropriately. Based on feedback from the Supervisors & Program Directors, the "Road Shows" held thus far have proven to be helpful to DSS supervisors in encouraging ongoing communication as well in providing clarification of various HR & Payroll policies/procedures. In addition, the meetings provided HR, Payroll & Staff Development staff with an opportunity to raise & discuss in detail, directly with first-line supervisors, information pertaining to the proper implementation of certain policies and procedures.



## xxii. Employees of the Month in 2014

Since 2007, the HR department in conjunction with the Commissioner's Office reviews recommendations made by supervisors and co-workers regarding the exemplary performance of various employees. After a comprehensive review, one employee is selected each month as the Employee of the Month. And the honor comes with a few perks including lunch and a parking spot, not to mention the pride that comes from being recognized by your fellow workers! Here are the 2014 employees of the month:



## XXIII. Planning & Research/Quality Management

Nassau was the first county in New York State to create and implement a Division of Quality Management within its Social Service department.

This unit works to:

- ensure effectiveness and efficiency of all DSS operations
- coordinate initiatives including the development of unit-specific standards, policy and procedures
- maintain ongoing review of Corrective Action Plans
- manage statistical information, data flow and analysis



The Quality Management group participates in most initiatives that the Department undertakes. The group has been a leader for understanding efficiency, technology, organizational effectiveness and cost savings. In 2014 some of the more notable initiatives included development of the SPOT system (Shelter Placement On-line Tracking system) to help keep track of homeless emergency shelter resources; contracts; domestic violence task force; disproportional minority representation; development of performance based contracts for employment vendors; and countless reviews of departmental program data to help support and guide administration policy and action.

The unit manages all departmental contracts which include over 500 day care contracts and dozens of other contracts for the various services utilized by the Department. The unit tracks these contracts and facilitates their processing within the Departments and throughout the County's approval process.

Finally, the unit is responsible for procuring all new services for the Department following the County's competitive procurement procedures. This involves developing, issuing and publicizing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and evaluating RFP responses so that the services purchased provide good value and meet the needs of Nassau residents.

## SWOT Analysis

As you work through each category, don't be too concerned about elaborating at first. Just capture the factors you believe are relevant in each of the four areas. Once you are finished, reorder the items in each category from highest priority to lowest.

<b>Strengths</b> <small>(internal, positive factors)</small> Strengths describe the positive attributes, tangible and intangible, of your organization/area. These are within your control.	<b>Weaknesses</b> <small>(internal, negative factors)</small> Weaknesses are aspects of your area that detract from the value you offer or place you at a disadvantage.
<b>Opportunities</b> <small>(external, positive factors)</small> Opportunities are generally external attractive factors that represent reasons for your area to exist and prosper.	<b>Threats</b> <small>(external, negative factors)</small> Threats are generally external factors beyond your control that could put your area at risk. You may benefit from having contingency plans for them.



Edward Mangano  
County Executive

John Imhof, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



Department of Social Services

Quarterly Consolidated Management Report  
2014 Fourth Quarter Report

[Click Here To Start Reviewing the Report](#)

## SOCIAL SERVICES VOLUNTEERS OF NASSAU COUNTY

*We Help*



*An artistic rendition of the volunteer office in Eisenhower Park*

Contact: 516-227-7415

Nassau County DSS, Planning and Research/Quality Management Department

## Nassau County

Domestic Violence  
2014 Statistical Trends Update  
October, 2014



Edward P. Mangano  
County Executive

John E. Imhof, Ph.D.  
Commissioner  
Social Services

Nassau County Department of Social Services, Planning and Research/Quality Management, October 2014

**Finding Permanent Housing For Families and Singles**

**NASSAU COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

NYPWA Conference  
July 2014

Edward P. Mangano  
County Executive

John E. Imhof, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



## xxiv. Office Services

**NO JOB TOO TOUGH!**



Office Services is responsible for the collating of the many application packets for our clients, NYS and County forms, all mail related functions, photocopying for the agency, monthly mailings, unit moves, the setting up of tables and training rooms, telephones, vehicles and drivers, building equipment, pulling and the distribution of supplies, paper and forms. OS is also responsible for the purchasing and receiving for DSS, fixed asset control, ordering and distribution of client benefit cards and Metro Cards. OS is the liaison between staff and the building manager and cleaning staff. On a daily basis, Office Services answer numerous requests for supplies, photocopying, classroom and table set ups, equipment repairs and handles complaints and request for building related issues.

### **Record Room**

The Record Room bar codes and tracks thousands of DSS client folders. Stores, retrieves and delivers client case folders to workers as requested. The Record Room coordinates the pick-up and deliveries of Client folders from our off site record storage vendor. They work closely with the Imaging Department to successfully scan the client files to make them available on line. The files are then boxed, bar coded and sent to the storage facility.

### **Record Clearance**

Performs clearance functions of client applications to determine if a client is already in the DSS system, assigns new case numbers if required and handles emergency requests from all program areas.

### **Data Entry Pool**

The Data Entry Pool enters data from client applications into the Welfare Management System. They work closely with Children's Services entering data for their program areas. They also do homemaking billing and process returned CBIC cards.



## **2014 Highlights**

- Office Services purchased new seating for the lobby giving the lobby a cleaner brighter appearance.
- Office Services purchased 22 new copiers with some enhanced features and handled all logistics for planning and implementation
- Office Services assisted in the setup of the SAC building for Volunteer Services.



## xxv. Staff Development

Staff Development is responsible to: provide Orientation to new staff; plan training for new and experienced staff; register staff for training and arrange for reimbursement of travel expenses; provide training related to technology; prepare and monitor training evaluation; promote opportunities for professional growth; complete State Training Needs Assessments with the various program areas at DSS; maintain a resource library; coordinate placement of social work interns; plan training for Foster Parents; award Tuition Remission credits to DSS staff; and award Tuition Reimbursement from the Social Work Education Consortium to Child Welfare staff pursuing their Masters in Social Work. 2014 was a busy year for Staff Development.



### 2014 Highlights

- Staff Development provided training for county IT initiatives that support our service delivery to clients and vendors: Service Alert System in CPS and Children's Services; SPOT Training to new shelter vendors; training on the upgrade to Windows 2007 and Microsoft Office 2010; SOLQ training.
- Nassau County hosted the first statewide offering of KEYS Supervisory Core training for supervisors in Child Protective Services and Foster Care.



KEYS is a new model of supervision in child welfare that engages staff in solution-focused work through support, development and management including coaching, career-long learning, peer support, active communication and accountability. Nassau County has been a pilot county in the KEYS Model of Supervision since 2012. CPS Supervisors also attended the first statewide rollout of "Supervising CPS Investigations," an updated curriculum for CPS supervisors.

- Staff Developments coordinated coaching clinics with Denise Schaller for all supervisors and Assistant Directors in CPS and Children's Services. In 2014 this included: Staff Morale and Team Building; Developing Critical Thinking Skills and Decision-Making Skills in Staff to Improve Objectivity and Create Consistent Case Management and Consistent Outcomes for Children and Families (including self-awareness, self-assessment); How Do We Build in Supports for Ourselves and Staff to Manage Trauma and Improve Resiliency; How to Professionally Manage and Model Challenges and Crises at



Ourselves and Staff to Manage Trauma and Improve Resiliency; How to Professionally Manage and Model Challenges and Crises at

- Work (Lack of communication; lack of privacy and space, functioning in response to crises instead of planfully, etc.)
- Staff development promotes workforce development training to help enhance management skills including topics such as Dealing With Difficult People, Productive Confrontation, Positive Counseling for Managing Problematic Employee Behaviors; and Leadership and Management skills
- DSS staff were also trained on the FISH! Philosophy: provide amazing customer services; build a culture where employees love to give their best every day; build effective leaders who inspire through their example; and improve teamwork and build trust.
- Staff from Adult Protective Services attended an annual "Legal Aspect of Protective Services for Adults." APS staff also received training on "Identifying and Addressing Depression and Mental Health in Adults" and "Understanding and Intervening in Self-Neglect."
- Staff development facilitated training by Stony Brook Medical Center on "Alzheimer's Overview".
- A webcast on "Opiate Abuse" was shown to CPS, Children's Services and APS staff. Staff also attended training on "Narcan and Opioid Overdose Prevention."
- Staff Development also planned and delivered five, half day sessions on "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children" (C-SEC) presented by GEMS (Girls Education and Mentoring Service) to DSS eligibility staff, CPS, Children's Services, Foster Parents, preventive staff, and CPS night staff. The training was made possible by a grant from NYS OCFS through the Safe



- Harbour Pilot Project.
- Staff Development provided monthly reports to Child Protective Services regarding completion of CPS in-service training hours for all CPS staff, including CPS Night Staff. CPS had a 100% compliance rate with the six hour CPS In-service training requirement for 2014.
- Training for CPS staff was provided on the following topics: Advanced Medical Issues in CPS; Working with Alcohol and Substance Affected Families; Neurobiology of Trauma; Legal Updates in CPS and Children's Services; Forensic Interviewing Best Practice; Domestic Violence Training for CPS Staff; Advanced Interviewing for CPS; expanded training to additional CPS staff on FAR (Family Assessment Response); Bed Bugs : Prevention and Management.
- All staff in Foster Care attended training on "Transition Plan: Helping Youth in Care to Plan for Their Future." The training was provided by Stony Brook's Child Welfare Training Program.
- Staff Development scheduled state-sponsored training on the following topics to eligibility staff in TA, SNAP and HEAP: Alien Eligibility for TA and SNAP; Case Documentation in TA and SNAP; 5 Day Institute for Temporary Assistance Programs on Selected Topics (onsite and in Albany); Case Processing Review for TA Supervisors; HEAP Eligibility and Certification Training; HEAP Regional Meeting; UIB (Unemployment Insurance Benefits) Budgeting and RFI Refresher.
- Staff Development scheduled state-sponsored training in Medicaid on the following topics: Self-Employment; Transfer of Assets; Chronic Care Institute; and Health Insurance Premium Payments.
- Staff Development also planned internships for four BSW Junior students from LIU Post during the Spring 2014 semester that provide a wide range of experience in Employment, Investigations, CPS and APS. Staff Development provided weekly supervision and completed evaluations for these interns.
- Staff Development planned and delivered training for Foster and Adoptive Parents on the following topics: Special Education Law presented by the Long Island Advocacy Center; Working with LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care presented by Stony Brook; How to Care for a Newborn Born to a Substance Abuser presented by Linda Finneran, PhD, physical therapist and Rosemarie Mosca, Public Health Nurse II, Nassau County Department of Health; Overview of Educational Law presented by the Honorable Robin M. Kent, Nassau Family Court Judge; Overview of Special Education presented by Dr. Dione Wynn, Director Pupil Personnel Service, Roosevelt Middle School; The Effect of Trauma on Children presented by Anthony Zenkus, The Safe Center LI.





## xxvi. Community Outreach Services

The Office of Community Outreach of the Nassau County Department of Social Services is designed to inform the communities of Nassau County of the services that are available for our residents. The Nassau County Department of Social Services administers many social service programs established and funded at the federal, state, and local government levels.



The objective of the Office of Community Outreach is to broaden public knowledge of our programs and procedures, as well as to improve client

access to benefits to which they are entitled. Having this important information will greatly assist residents of Nassau County. Program staff from the Department are available upon request to travel throughout Nassau County to conduct presentations

and informational forums on the various programs offered by the Department.

Informational presentations are available for all services provided by the Nassau County Department of Social Services. Such services include:

Adoption, Adult Services, AIDS Services, Child Protective Services, Child Support Enforcement, Day Care, Domestic Violence, Emergency Services, Employment for Temporary Assistance Clients, SNAP, Temporary Assistance, Home Energy Assistance Program, Housing and Homeless Prevention, Medicaid, Medicaid Managed Care, Services to Children and Families, and Temporary Assistance Fraud.

All speakers are provided at no charge as a service to the residents of Nassau County.





## xxvii. Legal Services

### *DSS Oversight*

Beginning in October, 2013, a Special Master was appointed by Federal Judge Sandra Feuerstein to work with the parties in the Dowdell v. Imhof lawsuit to review the department's performance regarding the timeliness of processing public benefit applications. Special Master Grace Moran was also tasked with assisting the parties in formulating and implementing a strategy for DSS' continued compliance with the parties' stipulation and applicable Federal and State public benefits law. To this end the parties reached an agreement in October, 2014 to fixed performance standards which the department has been meeting. As of this printing the Department continues to await a final decision by the Federal Magistrate as to the status of the lawsuit and the planned dates when oversight will be terminated.

### *Legal Services*

The DSS legal team consists of Agency Attorneys and Deputy County Attorneys assigned to the Department. These lawyers perform specialized client counseling on behalf of the Department. The areas served by the legal services bureau include but are not limited to the following program areas of the Agency:

- Commissioner's Office/DSS Administration;
- Adult Protective Services;
- Medicaid and Medical Assistance;
- Liens and Recovery;
- Services to Children and Families;
- Foster Care;
- Child Protective Services;
- Day Care and Employment;
- Special Investigations;
- Public Assistance;
- Food Stamps;
- Housing and Homeless Prevention;
- Planning & Research;
- Systems;
- Staff Development;
- Labor and Human Resources.



### *Duties and Responsibilities:*

Attorneys represent the Agency in legal and administrative proceedings, including but not limited to: Administrative Fair Hearings conducted by New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and New York State Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA); matters before the New York State Supreme Court, the Nassau County Surrogate, Nassau County District Court and in conjunction with General Litigation Bureau before Eastern District of New York.

### *Among the duties consistently performed by DCAs and Agency Attorneys are:*

- Attorneys serve as in-house counsel to the DSS Commissioner, DSS Executive Staff, DSS Administration, the Directors of each Division within DSS and DSS employees on a wide variety of matters ranging from the analysis of legal documents submitted to the Commissioner for signature to reviewing all correspondence, legal documents and mail received on a daily basis in order to determine the appropriate resolution/distribution/assignment of same.
- Attorneys serve as liaisons between the Agency and other County Departments and State Offices. Attorneys are in routine and regular contact with OCFS and OTDA in Albany regarding a large variety of pending and procedural matters. Attorneys are in contact with the Nassau County Comptroller's Office with regard to expenditures, the allocation of funds and scheduled audits which take place at regular intervals. DCAs and Agency Attorneys are in contact with the Nassau County District Attorney and law enforcement with regard to issues of suspected fraud. As well, DCA in this bureau routinely work with their fellow DCAs in other bureaus of the County Attorney's office.
- All petitions regarding the County Guardianship program as well as matters that are placed on the Surrogate Court's calendar are drafted by DCAs and agency attorneys who then represent the County in these matters. Attorneys will also prepare emergency access orders under Section 473-c to facilitate the Adult Protective Services function with respect to protecting the lives and safety of vulnerable adults, including seniors and those who are believed may be incapacitated or otherwise at risk.
- Guardianship petitions pursuant to Article 81 of the Mental Hygiene Law are prepared to protect an alleged incapacitated person against financial exploitation, foreclosure, and the potential dire consequences of living in the community without the capacity to fend for themselves. In these matters, DSS Legal Bureau attorneys file a special proceeding with the DSS Commissioner acting as "petitioner". Attorneys as well draft Family Offense Petitions to protect elderly clients.
- Attorneys evaluate complex legal documents for Medicaid compliance. These include Wills, Deeds, Accountings, Special Needs Trusts, Supplemental Needs Trusts, Irrevocable Medicaid Trusts, Revocable Trusts, Medicaid Personal Service



Contracts and Medicaid Promissory notes.

Attorneys advise the Medicaid program as to whether or not individual trusts or promissory notes are in compliance with federal and state regulations. Furthermore, attorneys advise as to whether or not the trusts shelter the assets purportedly marshaled to the trust or make assets available to the Medicaid program, on either an income or a resource basis.

- Attorneys actively assist the Agency's Liens and Recovery Division in the collection of monies owed the County in Social Services lien recoveries and pursue these recoveries in proceedings in Surrogate's Courts. In appropriate cases, attorneys represent the Agency as a necessary party in Surrogate Court to vindicate Agency stakeholder concerns with respect to APS, Medicaid compliance, and Medicaid/public assistance reimbursements.
- Article 10, Article 6 and Article 7 petitions under the Family Court Act that are initiated by Nassau County are drafted at DSS. These include emergency removal petitions pursuant to Article 10 of the Family Court in matters involving child abuse and neglect; access orders to see the child if access is refused (1034(2) of the Family Court Act); access orders to the home to do a home assessment, if access to the home is refused (Section 424(6)(a) of the Social Services Law and 18 NYCRR 432.2(b)(3)(iii) are the statutes governing home assessment access); prepare the 1029 Orders of Protection on an expedited emergency basis when required.
- Attorneys consult with the CPS and Foster Care workers and supervisors on an ongoing basis providing advice and guidance. Attorneys participate in Child Protective Services investigative conferences including "face to face" interviews if counsel is going to be present; attending Medical Consent meetings for children in Foster Care (when a child is in foster care and, the doctor or hospital wants the child to receive medical treatment, etc., and the biological parent will not consent), and Foster Care Service Plan Review conferences.
- The Adoption and Safe Family Act ("ASFA") provides for rigorous deadlines with respect to presenting petitions to terminate parental rights (TPR petitions) in cases where children are confined to long term Foster Care placements. Once a child comes into foster care, ASFA requires child welfare agencies to quickly match parents with services designed to address the problems that led to the child's placement in care. ASFA also requires that a decision about whether the child can be safely

returned home or should be moved toward adoption. The Department must petition to terminate parental rights if the child has been in foster care for 15 or more of the past 22 months.

- A key aspect of ASFA is the requirement that a Permanency Hearing be held in Family Court once a child has been in care for 12 months (and, if necessary, at 12-month intervals after that). Under ASFA, there are only five (5) permissible permanency plans that can be presented to the Family Court Judge at the Permanency Hearing: return to parent, adoption, legal guardianship, permanent placement with a fit and willing relative, and "another planned permanent living arrangement." TPR petitions involve the creation of involved social histories which supplement the petition and ASFA compliance requirements are federally promulgated.
- Attorneys have been defending DSS in fair hearing proceedings where benefits were either terminated or reduced. Attorneys represent the Department in conferences and administrative hearings in order to make sure that Agency determinations are upheld. Approximately a quarter of all fair hearings conducted by OTDA to determine either the client's eligibility or the sufficiency of the benefit provided have had either a DCA or an Agency Attorney present. Furthermore, the DSS Legal Services Bureau has been actively involved with the process of Reconsideration wherein unfavorable decisions by an Administrative Law Judge are subject to internal review by OTDA and on numerous occasions the DSS Legal Services Bureau has had unfavorable determinations overturned.
- Attorneys also handle the disclosure of agency records, freedom of information requests and subpoena compliance. Specifically, Attorneys advise the Agency in the capacity of privacy officer and freedom of information officer, and have responsibility for addressing FOIL, HIPAA, and similar confidentiality and public information concerns.



- The Legal Team has been assisting the Department in the preparation and implementation of the DSS Language Access Plan (LAP) pursuant to Nassau County Executive Order numbers 67-2013 and 72-2013.



## xxviii. Volunteer Services

Established in 1983, the Social Services Volunteers of Nassau County run programs throughout the year for individuals and families in need. The holiday and other programs include:

- Thanksgiving Assistance
- Toy Distribution
- Foster Children's Holiday Party
- Adopt-A-Family
- Back to School
- Dress to Impress

### 2014 Highlights

- Volunteer Services has moved into a new facility in 2014. The Seniors Activity Center



at Eisenhower Park which was originally the Woman's Golf Club is now home to the Volunteer Services. The new address provides sufficient space to hold the many donations received by the volunteers.

- The monthly boutique in the workplace has proven to be a valuable fundraising event. This event is run by volunteers and through their efforts, many families have benefitted with new furniture, mattresses and various household items. With these monies, food certificates, diapers, and other needs are purchased.
- Holiday program for children in foster care: gave out more than \$1,000 in gift certificates and \$2,500 in toys to children in foster care at the annual holiday party. This year marked the party's 37th year.

- Volunteer Services works closely with students who receive community service credits for hosting toy drives. The new toys collected are distributed to children in families receiving temporary assistance, children living in shelters, children in foster care and youth identified by staff or voluntary agencies as in-need. Many schools and companies throughout the county assisted volunteer services through the adopt-a-family and toy drive program. Companies and schools received a family's profile (identifying family composition, ages, gender & clothes sizes), and they shopped for the family, buying brand new clothing and toys for the children as well as clothing and coats for the adults. They also provided baskets full of nonperishable foods, with gift cards for the families to purchase for a festive meal. In many cases, they provided entertainment for the families such as movie tickets, fast food restaurants, fun zone tickets, and sporting events.
- In a ceremony at the County Executive's office, Volunteer Services was recognized by the County Executive for all the work they do to support families and children in need.



*Volunteers are honored for their dedication and services to Nassau residents from the County Executive.*



## XXIX. Nassau County Reentry Task Force

With the generous assistance of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), Nassau County established its County Reentry Task Force (CRTF) in 2006. The Task Force has created a comprehensive reentry program which emphasizes

### COMING HOME A Resource Guide for Re-entrants and Their Families



the utilization of collaborative case management treatment strategies using a multi-disciplinary approach and partnerships with government agencies, not for profits and service providers. The

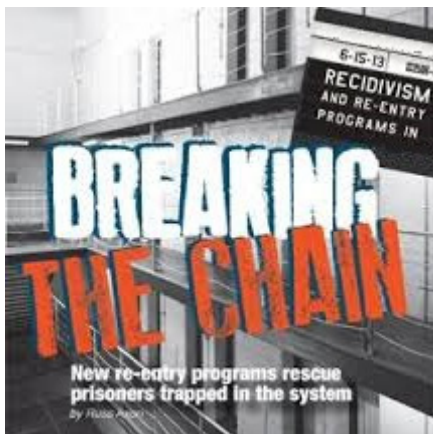
focus of the program has three (3) components, which include (1) providing linkage to Concrete services (Case Management) for the participant reentering from a Federal, New York State or Nassau County correctional facility who has had or continues to have a drug and/or alcohol abuse or dependency issue, (2) providing short-term clinical intervention for the reentering participant and his/her family and (3) identification of service gaps and advocacy for the development and improvement of services required for participants reentering our communities.

Participants who are reentering the community face barriers which impact their ability to reintegrate in a positive manner. The Reentry staff is dedicated to assisting participants to successfully reenter the community by improving the availability of and timely access to services, thus decreasing the potential for recidivism.

### The vision: "Reduce Recidivism"

The Vision of the Nassau County Reentry Task Force is to provide a greater level of safety for Nassau County residents by assisting offenders with reintegration into the community and back to their families. Support from the Task Force will provide offenders with the opportunity to become responsible, productive and contributing residents of Nassau County and assist in the reduction of recidivism.

To obtain more information regarding the Nassau County Reentry Task Force, contact the CRTF Coordinator at 516-227-7025.





### xxx. Resident Feedback and Kudos to DSS Staff

We are pleased to present some excerpts from a few of the commendation letters received in 2014 from residents of Nassau County complimenting DSS staff for their outstanding customer service.

**Disabled Client Assistance Program:** “I am very grateful for Ms. L assisting me in filing for my Social Security Disability. It would have been very difficult for me without her assistance. She is very patient and kind and I really do appreciate her professionalism.”

**Disabled Client Assistance Program:** “I am writing this letter to commend Ms. A. She is a great asset to your agency. She has gone out of her way to help me on numerous occasions. She is very caring, always available, returns calls immediately and tries her very best to be most helpful and fix any problems she can.”

**Temporary Assistance:** “Mr. J, due to your successful intervention with this client, he understood what was required of him in order to comply with regulations. Thank you for going above and beyond in order to accomplish the goals of servicing our clients professionally, kindly and efficiently.”

**Housing Support:** “I am writing to commend the performance of Ms. S during my recent visit to DSS.

She assisted me with kindness and sensitivity – it’s refreshing to encounter such a person.”

**Medicaid:** “Thanks to Ms. L for your excellent service and work ethics!”

**Medicaid:** “Ms. E was a pleasure to work with. She is compassionate, professional and caring. Her expertise and knowledge in this area cannot be surpassed. It is hard to find people like Ms. E who really enjoy their job, are loyal, knowledgeable and caring enough to take that extra time. On behalf of myself and my father, we are eternally grateful. She is an exceptional person.”

**Accounts Department:** “Too often public servants are not recognized for their willingness to go above and beyond the normal call of duty. I would like to take the opportunity to recognize an employee of the Nassau County Department of Social Services, Mr. V, whose willingness to provide assistance is second to none. I applaud his commitment to dedicated service and I believe he should be recognized for his efforts.”

Additionally, DSS staff received letters of commendation from the professional community:

“With your full support and cooperation by your staff, space and equipment in Nassau was readily shared with Suffolk staff, which minimized the potentially significant disruption of Suffolk’s operations... This would not have been possible without the efforts of

your staff... Thank you for sharing your resources without hesitation. We are grateful for the accommodations made to afford us this continuity of operations.”

John O’Neill, Commissioner of Suffolk County DSS





# NASSAU COUNTY Department of Social Services



Nassau County Department of Social Services  
Planning & Research / Quality Management Department