

SOCIAL SERVICES - 6010, 6055, 6070, 6100, 6109, 6140, 6141, 6142

MISSION

The mission of the Albany County Department of Social Services (DSS) is to improve the quality of life in Albany County by helping people to help themselves, to help those incapable of acting on their own behalf and to ensure everyone has an acceptable standard of living.

ABOUT OUR DEPARTMENT

DSS delivers services that support and protect families and individuals and encourage self-sufficiency and personal responsibility with compassion and respect. DSS is responsible for addressing the social service needs of the poor and the near poor, as well as those who are unable to care for and protect themselves. It is our hope that by offering citizens employment and training services, child support and effective case management, they will be able to leave the welfare rolls and go on to better, more productive lives. In partnership with the community, DSS is committed to providing excellent services through the efficient use of resources, in a fair, confidential, and dignified manner.

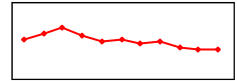
The agency provides direct client services within the following seven major areas.

- The **Temporary Assistance Division** is designed to meet the essential financial needs of eligible individuals and families in the community and foster their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- The **Employment and Day Care Division** provides job readiness training, job placements, and assistance with child care costs to help individuals prepare for, secure, and retain employment.
- The **Health Insurance Division** provides access to essential medical services to eligible individuals and families who otherwise would be unable to afford such care. Clientele are linked to participating Health Maintenance Organizations and medical providers, primarily through Medicaid, Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus, and the Medicare Savings Programs.
- The **Nutrition and Energy Division** operates the Food Stamp Program, which helps low income individuals and families meet their essential nutritional needs, and the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), which offers financial assistance to offset the high cost of home energy.
- The **Adult Services Division** assists elderly and disabled individuals obtain care in their communities and avoid more costly institutional care.
- The **Child Support Enforcement Division** provides services aimed at identifying and locating financially responsible parents in order to establish and enforce child support orders, thereby reducing families' dependence on public assistance.
- The **Legal Division** ensures compliance with local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and policies by the department, clients, and providers.

Approximately 38,000 Albany County residents (13% of the County's population) receive benefits and services through 25 individual programs administered by DSS. DSS staff determine family and individual eligibility for all appropriate services, authorize benefits and assist clients with accessing related services. Services to the most vulnerable individuals, those unable to provide for their own protection and care independently, are provided and coordinated by DSS staff to assure their safety and well-being.

Furthering efforts to improve efficiency and intergovernmental collaboration, the Department for Aging and the Veterans Service Bureau are co-located with DSS at 162 Washington Avenue, enabling individuals and families who avail themselves of County services to have access to information and programs offered by all agencies.

APPROPRIATION HISTORY



1998:	\$150,538,520
1999:	\$164,791,603
2000:	\$179,993,188
2001:	\$159,592,280
2002:	\$146,885,581
2003:	\$152,883,882
2004:	\$143,783,690
2005:	\$148,162,147
2006:	\$131,686,409
2007:	\$128,195,111
2008:	\$124,641,250

CONTACT INFORMATION

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OUTCOMES

- Albany County residents, regardless of age, economic condition or physical abilities, will have the basic necessities of life, including food, shelter, and health care. They will be empowered to achieve independence and self-sufficiency to the greatest degree possible.
- DSS will vigorously assist all adult recipients capable of working with pursuing employment. Failing a bonafide effort in such pursuit, benefits will be reduced within the context of regulatory authority.
- DSS will pursue every available administrative means to maximize revenues (child support collections, fraud repayments, chronic care co-payments recovery, liens, etc.) and offset the escalating local costs of providing services, particularly Medicaid.

TRENDS

- As discussed in the Economic Forecast section of this document, economic upset is expected to have the most immediate affect on economically vulnerable families and individuals. For many struggling families, unstable economic conditions lead to increased financial, social and personal stress, driving up the need for services provided by the County.
- At the same time that weakening economic conditions will create an influx of individuals and families seeking assistance from County health and human service agencies, the County is facing reduced assistance from state aid budget cuts. DSS will fulfill its mission to support and protect families and individuals most susceptible to the adverse impact of an economic downturn with reduced financial resources from the state government.
- In the past several years the Family Assistance caseload had decreased as parents and caretakers were successful in finding employment and support services to maintain independence for themselves and their families. However, this trend may reverse given the current economic conditions. Reduced job opportunities and other economic factors may increase the number of families seeking assistance to achieve economic stability. The Safety Net caseload – single individuals and long-term families – is likely to continue to grow, as it has over the past several years, as families may exhaust other forms of support and recipients struggle to overcome barriers that result in a longer road to self-sufficiency.
- DSS has continued to increase the number of children and adults receiving health coverage through outreach and eligibility expansions. This initiative takes on increased importance as the economy falters. If unemployment in the region increases, families will lose employer sponsored health insurance associated with their jobs. Enrollment of all eligible individuals into health coverage will be critical to ensuring access to essential medical services for children and families.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 2009

Albany County has embarked on an effort to devise community-specific, offender re-entry strategies and coordinate services for offenders who are released from prison to assist individuals with successfully reintegrating back into the community. Through a newly created Albany County Re-entry Task Force, those individuals will receive coordinated services designed to aid their transition back into their communities. These services include therapy and treatment that gets at the root of destructive behaviors and influences, as well helps offenders with needs such as housing and employment. To achieve this goal, the Task Force will analyze the services in Albany County that assist formerly incarcerated individuals with achieving self-sufficiency and economic independence, identifying gaps in service accessibility and availability, and recommending strategies to address identified needs and barriers. The Departments of Social Services, Probation, and Mental Health will co-chair the Task Force, working closely with NYS Parole, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, the Albany County Sheriff, Albany County District Attorney, and a variety of other criminal justice, law enforcement and human service agencies.

In 2009, Albany County's local Transitional Opportunities Program (TOP) will open a new Career Center. TOP provides participating low-income families with ongoing assistance and support to remain in the workforce and improve their

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financial well being. Families leaving cash assistance due to earnings will continue to receive transitional benefits and supportive services needed to help “make work pay.” Transitional benefits, such as Child Care, Food Stamps and Medical Assistance coupled with supportive services such as defraying costs of automobile repair and uniforms, are essential to the health and well being of those newly employed families.

The Temporary Assistance Division will focus on strengthening the ability of families to provide for children. Collaboration with Employment and Food Stamps Divisions will allow better identification of eligible clients and client needs. Sharing information on cases will facilitate case processing and aligning services to match the strengths and needs of each family.

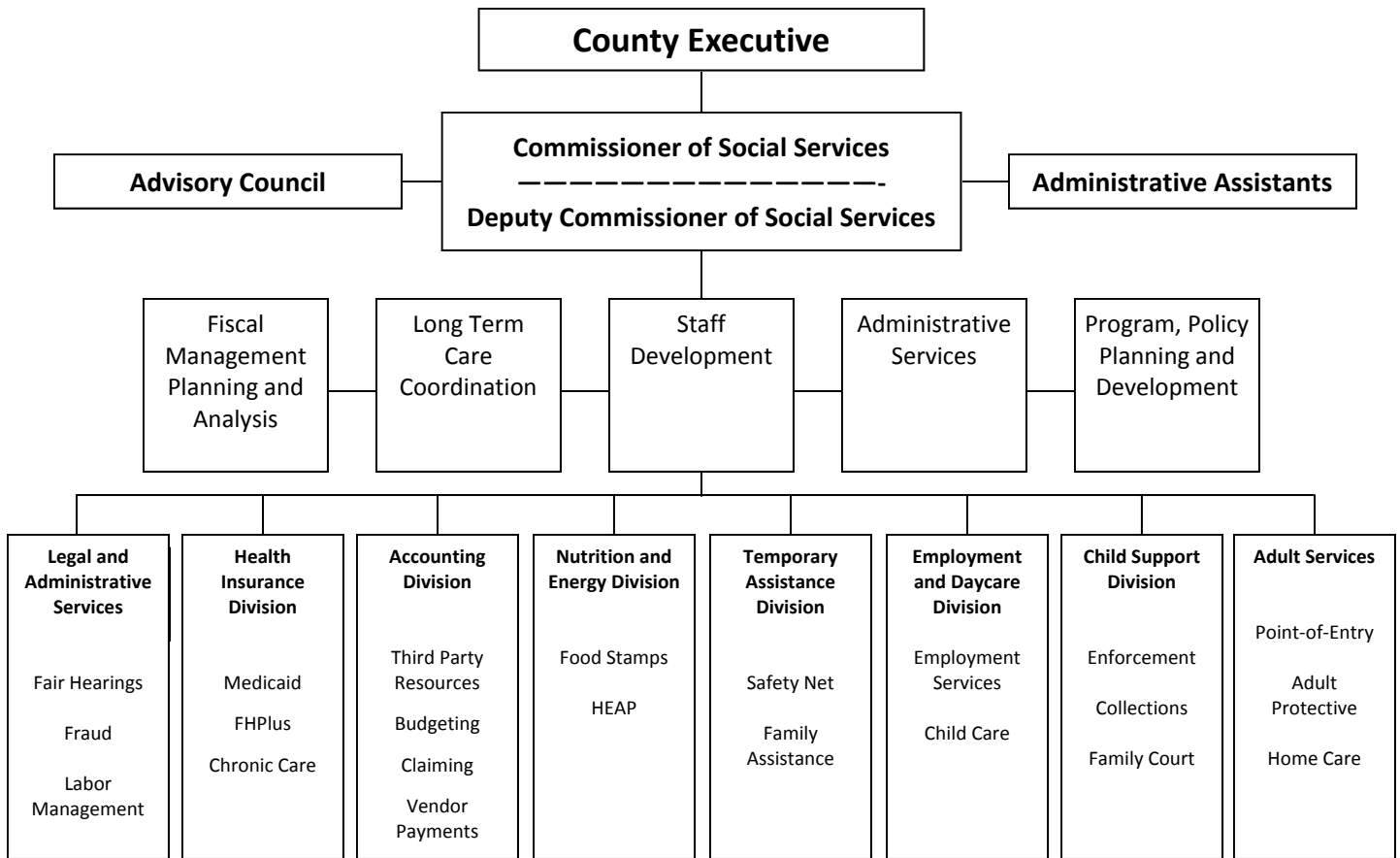
As part of a statewide initiative to increase the number of working families in receipt of Food Stamp assistance, Albany County DSS is partnering with community organizations to conduct outreach activities specifically targeting working families and to facilitate the Food Stamp application process. Recent changes to the application and recertification process are designed to accommodate schedules of working families.

The Child Support Unit will partner with the Employment Unit and the America Works of Albany Project to enforce employment requirements and support job placement and retention. Successful employment programs will result in increased child support payments. Coordination of divisional initiatives and information sharing will allow better tracking of client outcomes and result in improved compliance.

The Adult Services Division will collaborate with providers and community representatives, including the Long Term Care Council, to address the need for home health and personal care aides that provide assistance to elderly and disabled individuals in their own homes. One model that has been identified by the Council and DSS to increase efficiency of service delivery is the use of “shared aide” services. This model assigns one aide to a single building site or neighborhood where multiple individuals require care to reduce the amount of travel time for aides and allow more time for hands on care.

NY Connects - Albany County, the point of entry program initiated in 2007, will continue to assist individuals seeking long term care services and caregiver support. As the demand for long term care services increases, access to information and assistance for both consumers and providers is critical. The Medicaid Division will increase coordination and collaboration with the Point of Entry and the Adult Services Division to secure healthcare and coverage for individuals with long term care needs. The Division will work to expedite case processing and improve referral systems to other sources of support.

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Account	Description	2007 Expended	2008 Adjusted	2009 Proposed	2008-09 Change	2008-09 Percent Change
Appropriations						
Day Care-(6055)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 10,489,315	\$ 13,048,318	\$ 11,714,913	\$(1,333,405)	(10.2%)
Day Care-(6055)		\$ 10,489,315	\$ 13,048,318	\$ 11,714,913	\$(1,333,405)	(10.2%)
Emergency Aid For Adults-(6142)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 389,696	\$ 270,000	\$ 512,000	\$ 242,000	89.6%
Emergency Aid For Adults-(6142)		\$ 389,696	\$ 270,000	\$ 512,000	\$ 242,000	89.6%
Energy Crisis Assistance-(6141)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 2,119,895	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 500,000	100.0%
Energy Crisis Assistance-(6141)		\$ 2,119,895	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 500,000	100.0%
Family Assistance-(6109)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 11,698,672	\$ 9,800,000	\$ 11,438,099	\$ 1,638,099	16.7%
Family Assistance-(6109)		\$ 11,698,672	\$ 9,800,000	\$ 11,438,099	\$ 1,638,099	16.7%
Medical Assistance-(6101)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 1,156,376	\$ 1,344,100	\$ 1,407,112	\$ 63,012	4.7%

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Account	Description	2007 Expended	2008 Adjusted	2009 Proposed	2008-09 Change	2008-09 Percent Change
Medical Assistance-(6101)		\$ 1,156,376	\$ 1,344,100	\$ 1,407,112	\$ 63,012	4.7%
Medical Assistance-MMIS-(6100)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 55,427,359	\$ 57,135,083	\$ 61,857,977	\$ 4,722,894	8.3%
Medical Assistance-MMIS-(6100)		\$ 55,427,359	\$ 57,135,083	\$ 61,857,977	\$ 4,722,894	8.3%
Purchase Services for Recipien-(6070)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 1,817,411	\$ 2,025,584	\$ 2,742,301	\$ 716,717	35.4%
Purchase Services for Recipien-(6070)		\$ 1,817,411	\$ 2,025,584	\$ 2,742,301	\$ 716,717	35.4%
Safety Net-(6140)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 10,401,216	\$ 11,200,000	\$ 10,950,000	\$(250,000)	(2.2%)
Safety Net-(6140)		\$ 10,401,216	\$ 11,200,000	\$ 10,950,000	\$(250,000)	(2.2%)
Social Services-(6010)	Personnel Services	\$ 14,288,743	\$ 15,870,150	\$ 15,303,285	\$(566,865)	(3.6%)
	Equipment	\$ 260,991	\$ 27,708	\$ 1,500	\$(26,208)	(94.6%)
Social Services-(6010)	Contractual Expenses	\$ 5,226,180	\$ 7,874,776	\$ 6,813,209	\$(1,061,567)	(13.5%)
	Fringe Benefits	\$ 5,206,962	\$ 5,545,531	\$ 5,822,855	\$ 277,324	5.0%
Social Services-(6010)		\$ 24,982,877	\$ 29,318,165	\$ 27,940,849	\$(1,377,316)	(4.7%)
Total Appropriations		\$ 118,482,817	\$ 124,641,250	\$ 129,563,251	\$ 4,922,001	3.9%
Revenue						
Day Care-(6055)		\$(10,361,503)	\$(12,029,191)	\$(10,695,786)	\$ 1,333,405	(11.1%)
Emergency Aid For Adults-(6142)		\$(199,083)	\$(145,000)	\$(256,900)	\$(111,900)	77.2%
Energy Crisis Assistance-(6141)		\$(2,379,092)	\$(500,000)	\$(1,000,000)	\$(500,000)	100.0%
Family Assistance-(6109)		\$(6,376,583)	\$(9,702,530)	\$(9,419,630)	\$ 282,900	(2.9%)
Medical Assistance-(6101)		\$(170,000)	\$(1,344,100)	\$(1,407,112)	\$(63,012)	4.7%
Medical Assistance-MMIS-(6100)		\$ 0	\$(4,975,000)	\$(5,548,851)	\$(573,851)	11.5%
Purchase Services for Recipien-(6070)		\$(2,002,321)	\$(1,811,611)	\$(2,559,385)	\$(747,774)	41.3%
Safety Net-(6140)		\$(5,650,502)	\$(6,883,994)	\$(6,197,692)	\$ 686,302	(10.0%)
Social Services-(6010)		\$(25,633,136)	\$(26,255,435)	\$(25,404,338)	\$ 851,097	(3.2%)
Total Revenue		\$(52,772,219)	\$(63,646,861)	\$(62,489,694)	\$ 1,157,167	(1.8%)
County Share		\$ 65,710,597	\$ 60,994,389	\$ 67,073,557	\$ 6,079,168	10.0%
			2008	2009	2009	2008-09
			Adjusted	Requested	Proposed	Changes
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			364	371	366	2
						0.5%
						0.5%