



**TN** Department of  
**Human Services**



# Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2014-2015

Tennessee Department of Human Services | October 2015



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## OUR MISSION

*To offer temporary economic assistance, work opportunities, and protective services to improve the lives of Tennesseans.*

*Growing Capacity, Reducing Dependency*

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# Reflections from Dr. Raquel Hatter, Commissioner



We are pleased to share with you the SFY2016 annual report which provides you with various updates on the Department of Human Services. Since 2011 we have continued to maintain momentum on our journey to create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Human Service Delivery Model. Our commitment to those we have the honor to serve is unwavering and reflected throughout this report. The following provides you with some highlights of our continued focus on *Growing Capacity and Reducing Dependency*.

## ***Customer Engagement***

- Included specific feedback from DHS customers in the Transformational Pathways out of Poverty report.
- Recognized Families First customers for their success individually and at the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Resilient Families Forum.
- Commissioner's Office held calls with individual customers to get feedback on opportunities for improvement.



## ***Employees as Strategic Partners***

- Our inaugural class of the Commissioner's Office Mission Possible Leadership Academy graduated in October 2014.
- In the fall of 2014 we selected the inaugural participants for the DHS Change Agent Institute.
- Through strategy sessions conducted across the department we engaged more than 200 DHS employees in discussions on creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Human Service Delivery Model.
- In December 2014 the Division of Finance and Administration was recognized for Most Innovative, the Division of Quality Improvement and Strategic Solutions was recognized for Best Demonstration of Continuous Learning and Flexible Thinking and the Division of Family Assistance & Child Support was recognized for Most Improved Performance.





## ***Growing Capacity, Reducing Dependency***

- In summer 2014 we held the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Resilient Families Forum.
- In fall 2014 DHS joined the Governor's Workforce Subcabinet.
- In November 2014 we had a Poverty Symposium focused on moving families forward through promising practices.
- In January 2015 we released a report on transformational pathways out of poverty focused on solutions.
- In March 2015 DHS became a network partner with Ascend at the Aspen Institute, which has a primary focus on creating multigenerational success.
- In spring 2015 we created the office of Workforce Development, Employment and Transformation.



## ***Public-Private Partnerships***

- DHS team members held a focus group/workshop on moving families forward at the Annual Tennessee Association of Community Action Conference.
- Held strategy session with CSBG partners on creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Human Service Delivery Model.
- Held strategy session with Family Focused Solution partners.
- Implemented a pilot with The Family Center focused on Families First customers and nurturing parents.
- Implemented a pilot with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee focused on Families First.



Moving forward we remain focused on our commitment to growing capacity and reducing dependency. We are optimistic about the future of those we serve and humbled by the opportunity to partner with them at strategic points in their lives.

We appreciate our DHS team, those we serve, partners, the legislature and Tennesseans for their partnership in realizing our vision to be a leader in partnering with individuals to assist them with establishing or re-establishing self-sufficiency.

# Division of Family Assistance and Child Support

Family Assistance administers public assistance to citizens with low-income directly through offices located in all 95 Tennessee counties, offering resources to citizens across the state. This area provides assistance for families to meet basic needs – including paying living expenses, offering assistance through Families First, the department’s TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) program, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps). DHS also serves as an access point for TennCare/Medicaid application.

## ***Families First***

Families First, the state’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, or TANF, was created as part of the larger Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 (commonly referred to as “welfare reform”). It replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program and is the federal funding source for Tennessee’s TANF Program.

Families First is a workforce development and employment program. It is temporary and has a primary focus on gaining self-sufficiency through employment. The Families First program helps participants reach this goal by providing transportation, child care assistance, education, job training, employment opportunities, and other support services. Temporary cash assistance is also provided to families with dependent children when at least one parent is incapacitated, unemployed, deceased, or absent from the home, and the family is unable to pay for essential living expenses.

To be eligible for the program, participants must meet technical and financial eligibility standards and must agree to follow a Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP). As part of the PRP, the participants agree to keep immunizations and health checks up-to-date for their children, to keep their children in school, to cooperate with child support services and to participate in work and/or training for at least 30 hours per week.

## ***Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps)***

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program helps supplement monthly food budgets of families with low-income to buy the food they need to maintain good health and allow them to direct more of their available income toward essential living expenses. DHS staff determines

eligibility of applicants based on guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The primary goals of the program are to alleviate hunger and malnutrition, and to improve nutrition and health in eligible households. DHS has a dual focus on alleviating hunger and establishing or re-establishing self-sufficiency.

### **Stories of Success:**

“Cassandra” came to the Families First program seeking assistance as to how she could provide a better life for her and her children. She wanted to obtain the best job she could with a high school diploma. When she applied for Families First assistance she was living with a friend and working at a local grocery store 30 hours a week at \$7.25/hour. Her goal was to increase her hours of employment. She attended regular job coaching and later got a job with a car parts manufacturer. She is now working more hours a week at a higher pay rate and is better able to provide for her family.



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A young family applied for SNAP while experiencing a significant hardship in their life. The husband/father was in a serious car accident and spent many weeks in the hospital where he had to undergo several surgeries. The wife/mother had her interview with a DHS caseworker while her husband was in heart surgery at a local hospital. He was employed, but the accident prevented him from working for nearly four months. The SNAP program helped to supplement their food resources during this difficult time. When he was able to go back to work, they were able to discontinue the program and go back to their normal life. The wife/mother has expressed how grateful she was that DHS was there to help them. She said if it had not been for the SNAP program, they would have had trouble feeding their two children while her husband was off work. They were very appreciative of the months that they were able to temporarily get help.

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“Mr. Jones” and his wife had an open and active SNAP case. They were a family struggling to make ends meet for themselves and their children. Their struggles had led them to live with extended family that was assisting with basic day-to-day needs. Their hardships were drastically increased with the birth of a third child who was born premature and weighed barely more than one pound. In the midst of this, Mr. Jones took a job on a part-time basis with hopes of increasing hours in order to support his family and the needs of his new child, who would spend the next several months in intensive care.

When part-time wages were not enough, Mr. Jones and his wife made the decision to apply for the Families First program. Mr. Jones took full advantage of the work requirement in an effort to increase the household’s income. He worked with the Families First contractor and conducted job search activities in order to find new employment. Within just a few days, he was hired full-time making more than double the income he was bringing in from his previous job.

Since taking his new job, the household has been able to move out of their extended family’s home and into their own apartment. They are now responsible for their own rent payment and have additional monies for household needs.

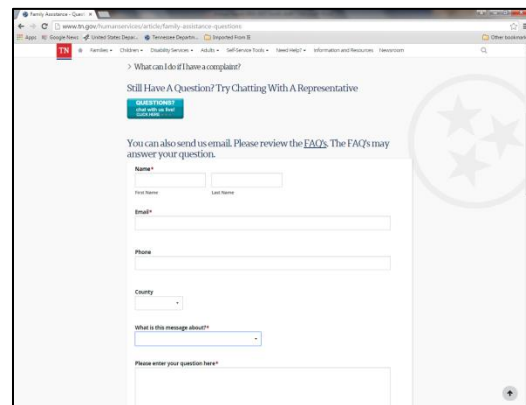
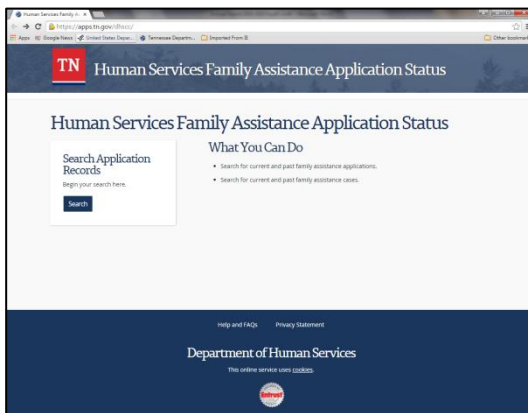


### **Statistics:**

- The Families First caseload for June 2015 was approximately 36,000, representing a 7.9% decrease.
- The Families First program impacts over 60,000 children in Tennessee.
- At the close of state fiscal year (SFY) 2015, SNAP participants consisted of approximately:
  - 1.2 million individuals of which more than 492,000 are children and 748,000 are adults.
  - These numbers include approximately 9,300 elderly people and more than 171,000 people with disabilities.
  - The SNAP caseload is steadily decreasing.

## Accomplishments:

- In September 2014, 3 Family Assistance self-service tools were launched: CaseConnect, Live Chat and Direct Email. With CaseConnect, users can view monthly benefit amounts and arrival dates, upcoming appointments, and check the status of their case 24/7 on a secure and mobile ready website. Live Chat offers real time interaction with DHS representatives on Family Assistance related topics; and Direct Email enables Family Assistance clients and Tennessee citizens to submit questions and concerns via email.



- The USDA recognized the SNAP program as No. 2 in the nation for most improvement in Case and Procedural Error Rate (CAPER), a measurement directly related to improvement in efficiency and customer service. Tennessee's CAPER rate was 10.44 percent in 2014. The national average is 26.30 percent.
- The USDA also recognized the SNAP program as having the sixth best SNAP payment accuracy rate in the nation for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2014. This national measure indicates the rate of SNAP cases with overpayments and underpayments based upon benefits for which a household is entitled.
- Implemented pilot program with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle TN that serves to provide mentoring as a family support service for TANF youth; tracking their progress through standardized assessments measuring relationship quality and child developmental outcomes.
- A pilot program has been established with middle Tennessee based *The Family Center*, with a focus on its Nurturing Parenting program. Nurturing Parenting is a strengths-based parent education program designed to help parents and their children acquire knowledge and skills that improve their overall level of family functioning.



## ***TennCare/Medicaid***

DHS serves as a point of access and provides technical/navigational assistance for the TennCare application process through computer kiosks and assistance provided by DHS Certified Application Counselors (CAC) in county offices. The CAC's are available to assist individuals as they apply for benefits through the Federally Facilitated Marketplace (FFM).

## ***Family Assistance Service Center***

The Family Assistance Service Center (FASC) receives phone calls, direct emails, and facilitates live chats related to SNAP and Families First cases. Primarily, the FASC responds to client inquiries and changes reported by clients. Customers also have the option of reporting changes to the FASC or their local county office.

## ***Child Support***

Tennessee's Child Support program has offices in each of the state's 31 judicial districts. The offices provide the following core services for customers: locating parents; establishing paternity; establishing and enforcing financial and medical support orders; reviewing and adjusting support orders; and collecting and disbursing child support collections. In addition to these core services, the Child Support program impacts families in other significant ways, as demonstrated by the success stories that follow.

Tennessee is one of just eight states operating a five-year grant program to help unemployed, non-custodial parents gain employment. With offices in three major cities (Memphis, Nashville and Chattanooga), this program provides services to parents who previously had nowhere to turn for help. Working with the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development, other employment service providers, and local fatherhood groups; we help find employment for those who are struggling to support their families. Following a multi-state evaluation of the program, we expect to demonstrate how the Child Support program can improve outcomes for children by helping to strengthen the economic situation of the non-custodial parent.

### **Stories of Success:**

"Eddie," had been paying child support regularly until the company he worked for closed, leaving him unemployed. For help in finding new employment, Eddie enrolled in the Child Support Non-custodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) program at his local child support office.

Eddie's job prospects were limited. To help him overcome his barriers to employment, his CSPED Case Manager guided Eddie through the needed processes. Eddie entered and successfully completed a training program that prepared him to qualify for a specialized license. The training was provided at no cost to Eddie because his tuition and fees were subsidized jointly by the CSPED program and a federally funded agency that works with the state labor departments to provide training for people trying to find jobs. Soon after, Eddie was able to find a job as a long-haul truck driver, and with his wages, he is once again able to pay child support for his children.



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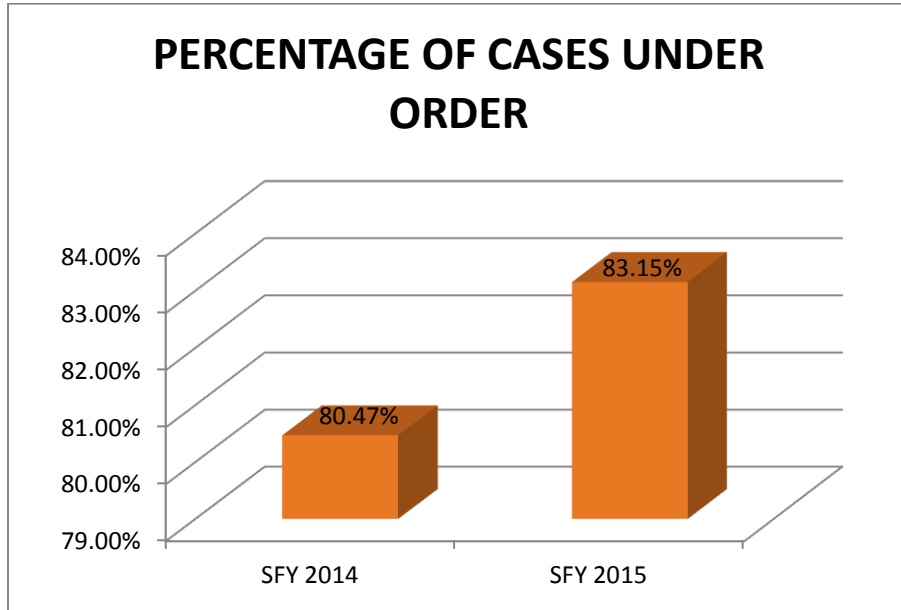
"Sean," a father who owed child support, had recently been released from a federal penitentiary. He was living at a residential reentry center while participating in an additional reentry program designed to help him adjust to life in the community and find employment. To help with his job search, Sean was referred to the Child Support Non-custodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) program.



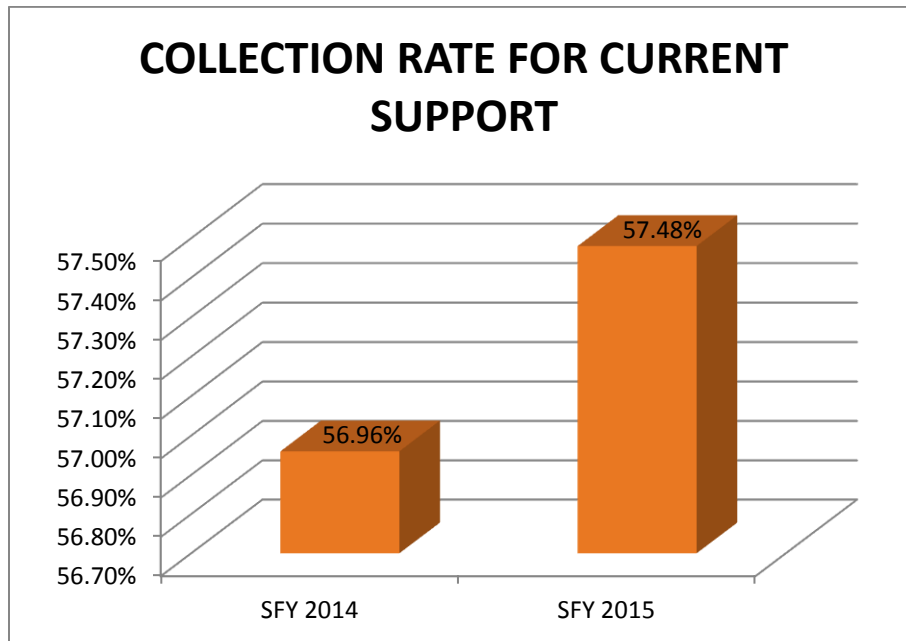
He enrolled in the program after meeting with the CSPED case manager. It took quite a while of intensive searching for the case manager and his CSPED employment counselor to find an employer willing to hire him despite his ex-offender status. The lengthy job search proved to be worth it however, because Sean has been working steadily for this employer for over 6 months. During that time, he has proven himself to be an outstanding and diligent employee. Sean recently earned a promotion and his employer has been providing him additional training to enhance his skills. His increasing knowledge and hard work, along with his employer's confidence in his ability, has set Sean on track for future advancement.

Sean is beginning to turn his life around since leaving prison, and as a result of his earnings, he is also able to make regular payments toward supporting his children.

**Statistics:**



***The percentage of cases under order increased in SFY 2015 to 83.15%***



***The child support collection rate for current support increased in SFY 2015 by 0.52%.***

- The FFY 2014 rate continued to exceed the 90% threshold necessary to qualify for the maximum federal incentive dollars.
- The rate of cases paying on child support arrears increased from FY 2014 to FY 2015 by .64%.

**Accomplishments:**

- Every month, an average of 166,000 Tennessee children benefit from the child support payments the Child Support program collects.
- For FY 2015, Tennessee’s total child support collections reached an all-time high of \$680,263,333. This was an increase of .21% over FY 2014 and represents a collection rate of \$1.9 million per day.

## Division of Rehabilitation Services

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) includes the Vocational Rehabilitation program, the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center (TRC) in Smyrna, 17 Community TRC’s, Tennessee Technology Access Program (TTAP), Disability Determination Services, the Tennessee Council for Deaf, Deaf/Blind and Hard of Hearing, and Services for the Visually Impaired and Blind.

### *Vocational Rehabilitation*

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR), provides a variety of individualized services to persons with disabilities in preparation for their employment in the competitive labor market. VR advocates employment outcomes for clients that are consistent with their individual strengths, resources, abilities, capabilities and informed choice.

**Stories of Success:**

Project SEARCH is an internationally trademarked and copyrighted program model for young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is designed with a collaborative model between Local Education Agencies (LEAs), vocational rehabilitation, a host business site, and a community rehabilitation program partner. The Rutherford County program showed potential for success from the start when a major hotel establishment decided to participate as

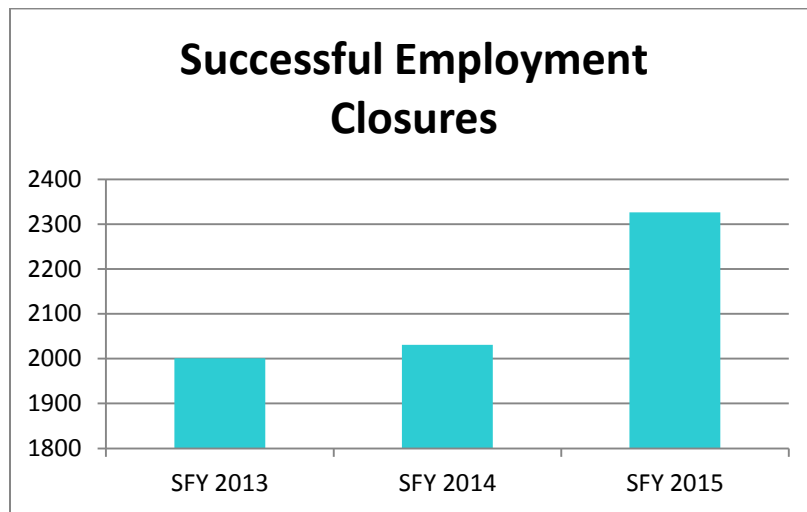




business host. The Tennessee Project SEARCH Steering Committee hired a teacher who was looking for a non-traditional classroom experience as well as an experienced job coach before selecting six young men and women seeking employment.

The hotel HR Director recruited managers and mentors who would be good communicators and teachers to support the interns. The interns and staff were absorbed into the hotel family and participated in all of the company contests and holiday events. Staff was also committed to the Employment Placement Meetings, designed to insure the individual intern is given the best chance to be employed by the end of the school year. All six of the interns were placed in jobs by graduation day; three interns secured jobs at the hotel, and three others were employed at businesses in the Murfreesboro community.

**Statistics:**



***In SFY 2015, the VR program increased successful employment outcomes from 2,031 in SFY 2014 to 2,326 in SFY 2015.***

**Accomplishments:**

- The first Project SEARCH interns began in the fall of 2014. There are currently 7 programs and 60 interns statewide. Thus far the program has assisted 42 individuals to be successfully employed.
- The Individualized Placements and Supports (IPS) initiative has served over 270 individuals with an employment rate of 42 percent and 148 employment placements.
- Eighty-eight (88) individuals have been trained through the Walgreens REDI program with 42 individuals successfully employed thus far.

## ***Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing***

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) and Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing are integral parts of the Vocational Rehabilitation program. This unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with vision and/or hearing loss. Rehabilitation Teachers and Assistants enable the clients they serve to live more independently in their homes and communities. Additionally, the unit provides specialized independent living services to individuals who are blind, and also operates the Tennessee Business Enterprises Program (TBE), which provides entrepreneurial opportunities for legally blind individuals to operate food service facilities in state and federal government buildings.

### **Stories of Success:**

“Mrs. Sanders” lives in a rural county and for many years has been the caretaker for her husband who has a chronic progressive illness. Mrs. Sanders enjoyed reading books, magazines, recipes and using her computer to keep records and stay in touch with family and friends prior to experiencing severe vision loss. In addition, she served as secretary for a local organization. As she continued to see a drastic loss in vision from Macular Degeneration she became worried that she would no longer be able to care for herself and her husband.

Mrs. Sanders qualified for Tennessee’s Independent Living Older Blind program. A Rehabilitation Teacher met Mrs. Sanders and her husband in their home to conduct a low vision and daily living skills evaluation. They found that simple but strong magnification helped



her read standard print for short periods of time. A portable electronic magnifier assists her to see information in the store, at church and at medical appointments. Mrs. Sanders tested screen magnification software at one of the Tennessee Technology Access Centers and found it very helpful for her own computer. She is now able to enjoy her favorite hobbies, work, access the Internet and overall take better care of herself and her husband.

### **Statistics:**

- In SFY 2015, Rehabilitation Instructors increased services to 1054 customers across the state which led to a greater sense of self-sufficiency for those clients.

- Two hundred and seventeen (217) clients participated in collaboration between Rehabilitation Instructors and Tennessee Technology Centers, which provided clients with high-end assistive technology devices to enhance personal independence in the home and in the community.

**Accomplishments:**

- Implemented five Technology Access-Independent Living contracts to evaluate client's need for and issuance of high-end assistive technology to enhance independent living abilities.

***Tennessee Council for the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing***

The Tennessee Council for the Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing (TCDDDBHH) exists to serve as an advocate for services affecting deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind persons through coordination, public awareness, and consultation in areas of public service, health care, education, and employment.

***Community Tennessee Rehabilitation Centers***

Seventeen community Tennessee Rehabilitation Centers across the state provide employment-related services to applicants and eligible clients of the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Vocational evaluation, employee development and employment services are designed to assist individuals with disabilities to reach gainful employment. The process involves identifying an appropriate vocational goal and assisting clients with attaining essential work behaviors to achieve and maintain employment.

**Accomplishments:**

- The 17 Community Tennessee Rehabilitation Centers successfully partnered with 49 local employers across the state to secure contract work in the Employee Development (ED) program.
- Five hundred thirty-five (535) clients were referred for employment development services. Of the 535 clients, 254 clients have been successfully employed thus far.

## ***Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Smyrna***

Serving all 95 counties across the state, the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center in Smyrna is a residential facility that provides vocational rehabilitation services. TRC Smyrna provides comprehensive vocational evaluation, pre-vocational and vocational training, training for vision impairment and traumatic brain injury, physical rehabilitation and transitional life skills training services.

### **Stories of Success:**

“Christopher” was a TRC student with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). At TRC, Christopher’s ASD needs many times overruled his ability to achieve his goals. He enrolled and left TRC three



times for disciplinary dismissal, but he did not give up. Upon his last return to TRC he entered into the newly formed Employment Readiness Program (ERP). The ASD Coordinator immediately began working with Christopher to assist in identifying triggers of inappropriate behaviors and alternate methods for resolving them before they became problematic. This technique worked for Christopher.

Christopher successfully completed ERP and was accepted into the Food Service Program. He was able to independently transition between various tasks without any problems while working food service. This was a significant accomplishment for Christopher. His internship with the TRC food service provider resulted in faster work speeds and compliments from his instructor for his accomplishments and behavior while on the job in the TRC cafeteria. Christopher then transitioned to the TRC Sweet Café for the final part of his training, where his skills flourished. Following his time at the TRC, Christopher went on to work in the food service program for a local university.

“Denise” was determined to learn the skills needed to help her get a job. She started at TRC Smyrna with great enthusiasm, drive and the desire to work within her community. While at TRC Denise participated in the Warehouse Training program, which taught the skills necessary to manage inventory, perform warehouse clerical work and other skills. After completing the





program Denise went back to her rural hometown. Finding jobs in her hometown was known to be challenging, however Denise did not let this deter her. She pursued a job at a local retail store. While at the store with her Business Employment Counselor, Denise had the opportunity to speak with one of the store managers regarding employment. The store manager and Denise discussed customer service and Denise's skills. By the end of the conversation, Denise was hired and now works as a stocker close to her home.

### **Accomplishments:**

- Created a model Automotive Training Workshop with new state of the art equipment based on research and current industry standards.
- Expanded industry recognized certification capabilities for graduating students to four of seven Vocational Training Programs. Certifications are now available in Auto Detail and Maintenance, Retail, Food Service, and Warehouse programs.
- Established partnership with Schwan Cosmetics USA through consultations with Schwan Management. Schwan will work with TRC to conduct hands-on internships and TRC will facilitate graduating students for hire at the newly constructed Murfreesboro Schwan facility.

### ***Tennessee Technology Access Program (TTAP)***

This program provides community-based programs and services to individuals with disabilities (and their families) who may benefit from assistive technology to increase or maintain their independence and support their integration into the workforce.

### **Stories of Success:**

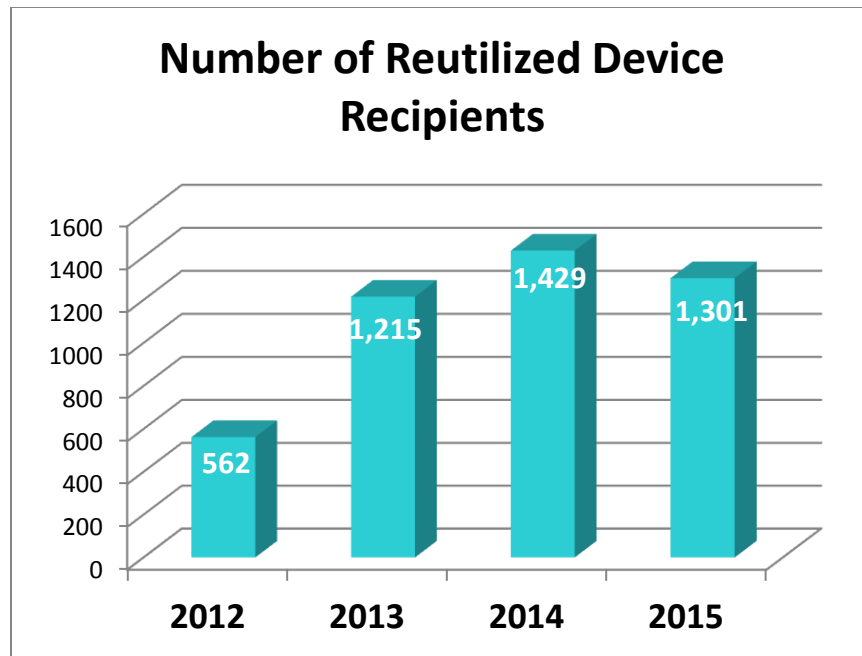
Twelve-year-old "Ben" and his mom went to a Tennessee Technology Access Program (TTAP) partner center looking for help improving his computer access. Ben has mild cerebral palsy



which mostly affects his right side. His mother had attempted to teach him to type using two hands with typing tutorial software but had little success. After observing Ben's attempts to use both hands, the Assistive Technology consultant suggested several techniques and devices for Ben to try. Ben was thrilled with the equipment, and said it was much easier for him to use.

Ben's mom was happy with the device demos and planned to purchase a keyboard with large print lettering and also a trackball mouse for her son to use at home.

**Statistics:**



- Loaned 871 devices to 507 individuals or their families.
- Provided 720 device demonstrations to 883 consumers, family members or professionals.
- Provided funding information and assistance to 3,568 consumers, family members or professionals.

***Disability Determination Services (DDS)***

DDS is fully funded by the Social Security Administration and processes the medical adjudication portion of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applications filed with the Social Security Administration (SSA).

**Statistics:**

- To date, DDS has assisted approximately 36,000 claimants in beginning or continuing their Social Security Disability benefits. Note, as SSDI and SSI are federal programs, they each operate in federal fiscal year.

# Division of Community and Social Services

The Division of Community and Social Services is focused on providing individuals and families with protective, educational, nutritional, and temporary financial assistance through a strong network of collaborative community partners. This division is committed to strengthening communities while providing support and resources for growth. Included within this division are Child Care Services, Community Grant Programs, Adult Protective Services and Nutrition Programs.

## ***Child Care Services***

The Child Care Services section plans, implements, and coordinates activities and programs to ensure quality, accessibility and the health and safety of children in care. The Child and Adult Care Licensing section is responsible for monitoring child and adult care agencies to ensure the health and safety of the young children and vulnerable adults in care. Child Care Assessment staff use a quality measurement instrument to assess each licensed provider annually and establish the Star-Quality Report Card Rating and Evaluation System for facilities. The Child Care Certificate Program provides assistance to families who need help paying for child care in order to meet the requirements of the Families First program. Child care assistance not only gives Families First parents/caretakers peace of mind while they participate in work and work-related activities, but also provides quality child care for children.

Within the Child Care Services section, statewide early childhood-related services are managed through child care partners including: Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) centers, Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA), and Tennessee's Outstanding Providers Supported through Available Resources (TOPSTAR). These services provide a support system for improving and maintaining the overall quality of child care across the state and help provide parents and families with safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate child care options.

Throughout SFY 2015 Child Care Services set a goal to strengthen child care services in a way that will support a focus on child outcomes and family engagement. In doing so, Child Care Services staff have engaged stakeholders on a state and national level. In fall 2014, child care providers met with the Child Care Services Director in Knoxville, Nashville, Chattanooga and Memphis to learn more about the Child Care Development Block Grant Re-authorization Act, and provide feedback on the program. Child Care Services staff have attended federal Office of Child Care meetings, the National Quality Rating Improvement System Conference, and worked

with both federal and state partners on grant projects. DHS has also worked with two state teams on national programs that examine the early childhood education workforce.

## **Stories of Success:**

### TECTA Testimonial

Eight years ago, I began to ask myself what was my calling in life. At that time, I had been working at a factory for nearly two decades with good pay and great benefits. I felt a strong urge to work with children and open a child care center. I volunteered with my vacation bible school and loved it. I then visited a few local child care providers to learn what it took to run a center, and everyone referred me to the CCR&R's and TECTA. I went to trainings and support group meetings and then I went to a TECTA orientation. They had answers to all my questions. I enjoyed and got so much knowledge and guidance in that one orientation class, I signed up for all the different age group orientations to learn all I could about what children in different age groups needed. I even went through Administrator's orientation classes that TECTA had to offer.



After opening my daycare and going through the orientations, I wanted more information on how to help myself and my daycare be successful and help the children be all they could be. So, with the suggestion and guidance of the TECTA group, I started going for my Child Development Associate Credential (CDA). I am almost 50 and being a college student didn't sound right for someone my age. I was afraid I would not be able to handle it, but TECTA helped me register and was very supportive. I have earned my CDA Credential and have learned so much more through the 4 college courses I had to take, not to mention the thrill to know I am 50 and can still learn and make a difference in a child's life.

## **Statistics:**

- Currently there are 2,566 licensed family, group and center agencies with a combined enrollment capacity of more than 119,000 children. Approximately 1693 child care agencies have three-star ratings, 295 have two-star ratings and 45 have a one-star rating. There are 49 adult day care centers with an enrollment of 1,160.



- The number of children enrolled in quality child care facilities through the Child Care Certificate Program was approximately 23,810 as of June of 2015.

### **Accomplishments:**

- Implemented online availability of compliance history (violations of child care licensing rules) for licensed child care providers, prior to Child Care development Block Grant requirement. The availability of child care compliance history online furthers the department's emphasis on parental engagement and support, and serves as another tool to assist parents in choosing child care.
- Introduced requirement that all Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) grantees submit weekly accountability reports for review.

### ***Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)***

The CSBG program is funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is administered through a statewide network of 20 nonprofit and local government agencies designated by Health and Human Services as eligible to provide services. Agencies conduct annual needs assessments, develop a community action plan, and offer services based on identified local needs. The goal of the program is to provide services to eligible individuals with low income and families to improve their health and well-being.

### **Stories of Success:**

In January "Denise," a single mother to a 12-year-old son, was unexpectedly laid off her job. She received unemployment benefits for a short time, which was hardly able to cover her bills. In February she went to pay her rent, and expressed concerns over being able to cover future payments with her landlord. Denise's landlord



recommended that she visit the local community human resources agency, a CSBG partner, for help. Denise began an employment program with the CSBG partner in March. She attended the employment workshops right away, and was diligent about submitting applications and attending job-seeking events. Although she faced several challenges, Denise later obtained a temporary job, which transitioned into a full-time Office Manager position. Within weeks, Denise went from being unemployed to being a salaried employee with full benefits. In her new role, Denise serves as Hiring Manager for new staff members. When she was approached

to find several new hires at one time, she contacted the community program that helped her to help fill their roster and share the opportunity of employment with other clients who might have been in similar situations. Denise not only worked hard to create stability for herself, but she is also looking back to help others.

**Statistics:**

- In SFY 2015 380,931 individuals with low-income received services under the regular CSBG program.

**Accomplishments:**

- Twenty (20) CSBG partner agencies were trained in and completed Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) training, designed to promote greater efficiencies and effectiveness for community service agencies.
- Implemented assessment tool for CSBG partner agencies to determine client/family needs with a holistic approach for better outcomes.

***Nutrition Programs: No Tennessee Child Should Go Hungry***

DHS and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service have established a special partnership to ensure that no child should go hungry, reducing the rate of food insecurity across the state through food programs. Two key drivers are improving program integrity and maximizing impact. DHS recognizes the importance of public/private partnerships and appreciates the efforts made by partners to feed children in need. To



truly support and move families forward takes a collaborative approach that starts at the community level whereby everyone is doing their part to contribute. Together and with the help of Tennesseans, DHS is on a journey toward transforming Tennessee's food programs and alleviating child hunger. The department, along with the USDA Food and Nutrition Service

hosted a special strategy session in March, *Transforming Tennessee's Food Programs*, to jumpstart efforts. Similar sessions will continue throughout the year and the department has begun to enlist the comments of Tennesseans across the state using a special email address, [NoHungryTennesseeChild.DHS@tn.gov](mailto:NoHungryTennesseeChild.DHS@tn.gov), for their added contributions.

### ***Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)***

CACFP provides reimbursements for nutritious meals served to participants who meet age and income requirements. Eligible participants include children enrolled in child care institutions who are 12 and younger; children of migrant workers who are 15 and younger; persons of any age with one or more disabilities who are enrolled in an institution or child care facility serving a majority of persons who are 18 and younger; and adults who are enrolled in adult care institutions that serve functionally impaired adults or persons who are 60 or older. Eligible institutions include child and adult care centers, child care homes, emergency shelters and afterschool care programs for at-risk children.

#### **Statistics:\***

- In SFY 2015 the CACFP provided more than 45,000,000 meals.  
*\*The number of meals represents those submitted for reimbursement as of June 30, 2015. The actual number served is subject to change. As a federal program, CACFP operates on a federal fiscal year schedule.*

### ***Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)***

SFSP provides reimbursements for nutritious meals served to participants in needy areas during periods when their schools are closed for vacation. The program primarily serves children 18 or younger in areas where poor economic conditions exist and in residential camps where children are determined individually to be eligible. Persons older than 18 who are mentally or physically disabled and who participate in school programs for the disabled are also eligible to participate. Sponsorship of the SFSP is limited to public or private, nonprofit school food authorities; state, local, municipal or county governments; residential public or private, nonprofit summer camps; public or private, nonprofit colleges or universities administering Upward Bound Programs; and private, nonprofit organizations. Eligible feeding sites include public parks, recreation centers, schools, churches, playgrounds, residential camps and public housing complexes.

## **Statistics:**

- In summer 2014 approximately 4,187,000 meals were served.
- In summer 2015\* approximately 4,339,000 meals were served.

*\*The number of meals served is as of September 2015 and are not final.*

## **Adult Protective Services**

Adult Protective Services (APS) is the only service in Tennessee mandated to intervene when adults with mental and/or physical impairments are in danger because they are unable to provide for their own needs, or when others, who are responsible for the care of those adults, either abuse, neglect or exploit them.

## **Statistics:**

- In SFY 2015, APS investigated 10,390 cases.

## **Accomplishments:**

- Joined in partnership of community groups with Plough Foundation to support a coordinated response to elder abuse (CREA) in Shelby County.
- Served on the Tennessee Elder Abuse Task Force.
- DHS/APS, along with community partners and state sister agencies, celebrated World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on June 15, 2015 to promote awareness of \abuse, neglect and exploitation of elders. The State Capital cupola was also lit purple (the official awareness color) the week of WEAAD.

## **Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)**

SSBG is funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is administered by 15 local nonprofit and governmental agencies across the state. The program functions as the primary support network for elderly and disabled adults to help them maintain independence or prevent adult abuse, neglect and exploitation. One of the primary services provided with SSBG funds is the Homemaker Program, which provides in-home care services



for frail, disabled, and vulnerable seniors who are referred by the DHS Adult Protective Services program due to allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

### **Stories of Success:**

“Mr. Chandler” is 55-years old and resides alone. He was referred to the Homemaker Program based on an APS investigation and assessment of needs. He had a stroke which resulted in numbness on his right side, speech problems, vision loss in his right eye, and frequent seizures. Mr. Chandler used a manual wheelchair which limited his mobility. Even though Mr. Chandler lived in a senior community, he rarely left his home because he was dependent on the assistance of others to maneuver through his environment. During a home visit, his Homemaker Program Case Manager addressed the growing concern of Mr. Chandler’s lack of mobility which affected his ability to interact socially in his community. She collaborated with the necessary parties and helped Mr. Chandler to receive an electric wheelchair. Mr. Chandler has a newfound independence; he is now able to mingle with his neighbors and sit outside to enjoy his surroundings.



### **Statistics:**

- In SFY 2015 the Homemaker Program served more than 2,600 clients.

## **Division of Appeals and Hearings**

The Division of Appeals and Hearings processes administrative appeals for all programs administered by the Department of Human Services. In addition, the division is responsible for disqualification hearings covering the SNAP and Families First programs, fourth-level employee grievance, and due-process hearings. When an applicant or recipient of assistance or services is dissatisfied with any action taken by the Department of Human Services, he or she has the right to file an appeal for a fair hearing before an impartial hearing official.

**Statistics:**

In SFY 2015 the Division of Appeals and Hearings:

- Processed more than 21,000 appeal requests
- Completed more than 8,000 appeal resolutions
- Processed over 800 Administrative Disqualification Hearing (ADH) appeal requests

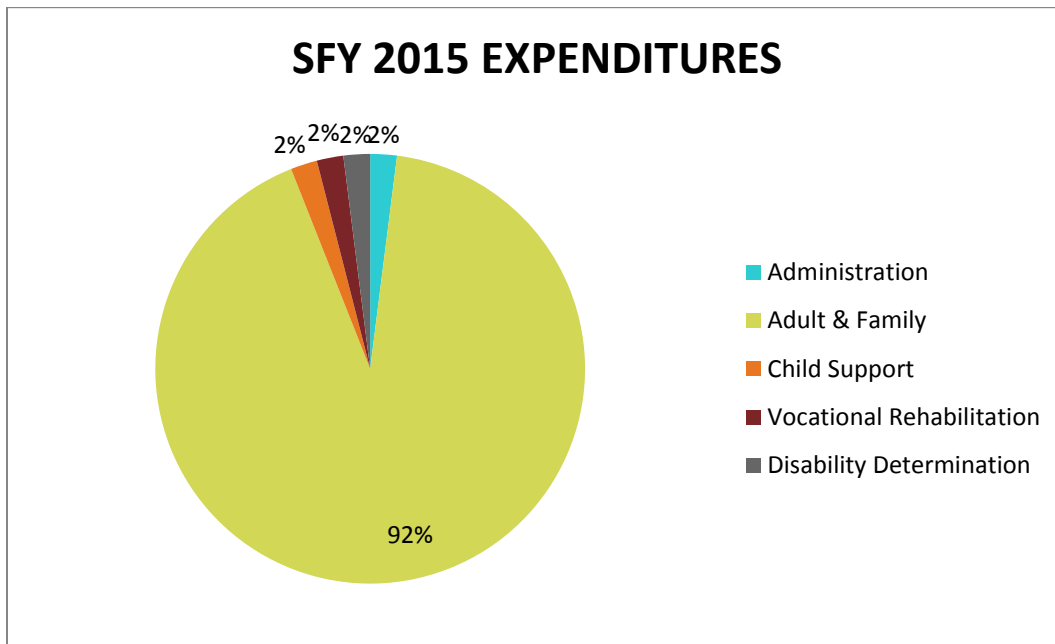
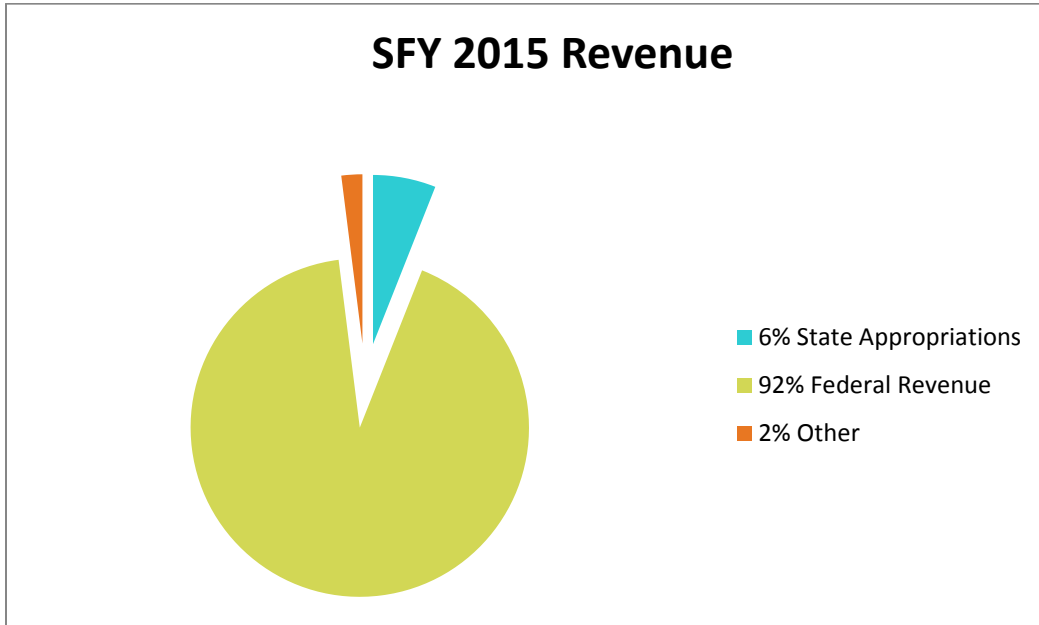
**Accomplishments:**

- Reduced the number of continuances and the overall number of days between requests for fair hearing and Initial Order in Family Assistance appeals to ensure increased internal/external customer service.
- Re-organized the docket scheduling process to ensure maximized staff productivity, hearing timeliness, and customer service.

## Division of Finance and Administration

The Division of Finance and Administration oversees four areas of operation within DHS: Budget, Fiscal Services, Information Technology, and Procurement and Property. Within these various areas, the division is responsible for preparing the annual department budget; performing fiscal analysis; monitoring federal programs for cash management; preparing federal expenditure reports; processing contractor/vendor payments; ensuring the procurement of all goods and services; managing inventory and surplus of capital assets; managing fleet vehicles; overseeing facilities operations; providing a support team for such functions as mail operations and telecommunications; managing technical support to meet operational needs across the department; overseeing a variety of IT projects simultaneously; as well as performing a variety of other duties. The Department of Human Services' approved budget for SFY 2015 was approximately \$3 billion.

**Statistics:**



## Accomplishments:

- The Fiscal Child Care Unit in partnership with the Child Care Services achieved its SFY 2015 CFG goal of increasing electronic submission of Child Care Providers' Enrollment Attendance Verification Forms (EAVs). The goal was to increase provider participation in online submission of EAVs by 15%. The department met this goal in May 2015. As of June 30, 2015, the department had exceeded the goal and had increased participation by over 18%.
- The Central Procurement Office's goal is to drive 80% of the office supplies/toner/paper spending to the negotiated core market basket items. The DHS Office of Procurement is utilizing the market basket at a 90.3% rate for the year, exceeding the goal by 10%. DHS was one of the few state agencies to meet and exceed this goal and had the highest percentage of market basketed products of all of the state agencies for a second year in a row.
- In keeping with the department's commitment to transformational change, Information Technology staff developed new online tools to increase customer access: CaseConnect, Live Chat and Direct Email. These tools involved minimal barriers to implement, very little capital, and minimum resources for development. The three modernization tools allow Family Assistance customers access to online and mobile ready Families First and SNAP program information.

## Public Information and Legislative Office

The Public Information and Legislative Office facilitates public, media, and legislative requests. Through its communications function, it coordinates public relations efforts and responds to media requests and inquiries. The office also focuses on legislative priorities for the department including the analysis of legislation affecting the department, facilitating the passage of legislative initiatives for the department, and representing the department before the Tennessee General Assembly. The customer service section of the office works closely with all divisions to help ensure customers served throughout the department and state receive services in a professional, respectful, and timely manner. It also assists in creating opportunities to receive feedback and connect with customers and community partners.

# Office of Inspector General

The Office of Inspector General includes oversight of the department's independent accountability functions. Those functions include internal audit, external program review, and program integrity. This office conducts internal and external program reviews and audits, investigates referrals of potential fraud, waste and abuse, handles adjudication, and processes collections of claims overpayment.

## ***Audit Services***

### **Internal Audit**

The Internal Audit unit assists the department in complying with federal, state and departmental laws, regulations and rules by conducting regularly scheduled and random audits of various DHS administered programs. Additionally, through the use of the Department of Finance and Administration's Financial Integrity Act (risk assessment), Internal Audit helps identify areas that may require increased monitoring and support.

### **External Program Review**

The External Program Review unit ensures that entities that have a contract or contractual agreement with the department provide quality services to clients by conducting on-site monitoring reviews. Monitoring ensures that the department's clients and partners work in accordance with all contract terms, current state and federal laws, rules, policies, procedures, and that all valid payments and documentation is adequately supported. The unit also provides assurance that state and federal funds are used appropriately and that proper services are provided to the department's clients. Additionally, the results of monitoring provide the department the opportunity to receive feedback from contracting entities regarding quality and the contractor's relationship with the state.

## ***Program Integrity***

The Program Integrity unit focuses on the deterrence, prevention, and detection addressing fraud, waste, and abuse in DHS administered programs. Program Integrity conducts internal investigations of DHS staff, contractors, and customers as well as coordinates with partnering law enforcement agencies in criminal prosecutions. In addition, a primary function of the Program Integrity unit is to examine and processes SNAP program claims.

Recently DHS was awarded \$1.4 million from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a SNAP Program Recipient Trafficking Prevention Grant to conduct process

improvement activities, as well as develop and pilot innovative strategies to prevent, investigate, and prosecute SNAP trafficking within the state of Tennessee. In addition to the grant, the Program Integrity Unit has implemented policies to strengthen procedures for both internal and program related investigations.

## Office of General Counsel

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) includes Legal Services, Human Resources and the Office of Professional Development (HRPD).

### ***Legal Services***

The Office of General Counsel Legal Services Unit is comprised of 23 staff members across the state in Nashville, Knoxville, and Memphis.

Legal Services provides legal advice and legal representation in judicial and administrative litigation affecting all department programs. Attorneys with the OGC prepare departmental rules affecting program implementation; conduct analyses of legislation affecting the department; prepare legislation for the department; and represent the department before the Tennessee General Assembly. The OGC reviews contract proposals for the provision of services for implementation of department programs. The OGC also provides compliance oversight and training involving Titles VI, VII, and IX, ADA, HIPAA, and Motor Voter Registration, as well as processing civil rights, EEOC and Human Rights Commission complaints involving program services and department employees. Attorneys with the OGC also review proposed disciplinary actions involving employees and litigate department personnel actions. The OGC provides ongoing legal training for legal and program staff in the Adult Protective Services, Child and Adult Care Licensing and Child Support programs. Additionally, the OGC works closely with the State Attorney General's office in federal and appellate litigation involving department programs.

### **Accomplishments:**

- The Tennessee Human Rights Commission's Title VI Compliance Program approved the Department of Human Services Title VI Implementation Plan which met the required compliance standards with no findings.



- OGC Attorney provided “Legal 101” training to 962 staff members across the state. Legal 101 training is available to familiarize employees of relevant legal issues that affect the department.

## ***Human Resources and Professional Development***

### **Human Resources**

Human Resources (HR) manages the departmental process through which all employees are hired, promoted, evaluated, disciplined and paid. The central point for employee relations, HR is a critical partner for promoting staff development and encouraging the effective application of performance standards. DHS Human Resources is a team of 35 employees in three state office units: Employee Relations, Transactions/Class Comp and Time, and Labor/Benefits. Human Resources field analysts are stationed in strategic locations across the Tennessee. The DHS HR team provides services, support and employee information to more than 4000 DHS staff, including: new employee orientation, employee relations, hiring process transactions, time and compensation, benefits and other employee-related services. DHS HR works closely with the Tennessee Department of Human Resources (DoHR) to efficiently implement statewide initiatives including Performance Management, salary and compensation plans.

### **Accomplishments:**

- HRPD in partnership with the Public Information and Legislative Office coordinated the first DHS Mission Spirit Week. Staff across the state were encouraged to create and participate in activities reflective of the DHS mission.

### **Office for Learning and Professional Development**

The Office for Learning and Professional Development (OLPD) incorporates adult learning models to prepare new and existing DHS employees to provide quality customer service through the correct application of policy and provision of timely services for DHS external customers. In addition to providing continuing education on new policy and procedures, existing DHS employees are provided refresher policy training, soft skills training, and computer skills training. OLPD staff delivers DoHR leadership and general training, as well as DoHR-approved DHS professional development training. The comprehensive training programs that are provided to DHS employees enable them to assist customers in achieving self-sufficiency,

enhance the employee's job skills, and prepare staff to evolve in a progressive direction in their profession with DHS.

### **Accomplishments:**

- Enhancement of Online Learning and Tracking using Edison – OLPD provides online training and online assessments with tracking in Edison. During SFY 2015 DHS staff completed 47, 361 activities (online training modules and assessments) in Edison. OLPD has increased on-line training opportunities by double the amount of opportunities in SFY 2014.
- As of the June 2015 graduation, there have been 60 DHS managers and supervisors that have completed the New Supervisor Academy.
- During SFY 2015, OLPD developed 241 classroom and online training modules, including new employee classroom training for various programs, and a complete re-build of the Family Assistance Tennessee Online Policy New Employee Training (TOPNET). All new Family Assistance employees training curricula are multiple weeks of classroom and blended learning. Additionally, all programs have continuously developed and delivered new policy training, refresher policy training, systems training, soft skills training, and procedural training for classroom, online and blended delivery.

## **Division of Quality Improvement and Strategic Solutions**

The Quality Improvement and Strategic Solutions (QISS) division was established in 2013. It includes the following units: Performance Management, Research and Data Analysis, Centralized Policy and Planning, and Quality Assurance and Quality Control. This division is responsible for monitoring and tracking a variety of performance outcomes. QISS is also responsible for managing accountability initiatives in the department, providing quality data, leading process improvement efforts, creating and communicating policies and procedures, and implementing statewide systems and processes while promoting the principles of quality improvement and working closely with each division to improve coordination and collaboration.

During this fiscal year, the QISS team was instrumental in the establishment of the Business Process Re-Engineering Oversight Committee (BPR). The purpose of the BPR Oversight

Committee is to assist the various business areas and regions of DHS operations in conducting testing by offering the expertise of the committee members and providing oversight and direction in a collaborative process. During its inaugural year, the committee focused efforts within Family Assistance to facilitate training, process mapping, and testing in three pilot counties and initial statewide rollout. In addition, QISS has provided support in the implementation of the cadence of accountability meetings within QISS and other divisions and program areas. These weekly meetings focus on assessment of strategy effectiveness through continuous support and accountability as team members make commitments and provide updates on progress toward goals.

### ***Performance Management Unit (PMU)***

Performance Management is responsible for increasing departmental accountability and supporting the Tennessee DHS Accountability Process (T-DAP) meeting process. This bi-monthly process supports the achievement of the department's Customer Focused Government (CFG) goals. The Performance Management Unit assists all departmental divisions with monitoring productivity, accuracy, and timeliness; as well as provides reports on performance measures for all divisions.

Other Performance Management Unit responsibilities include: providing technical performance management assistance to management and field offices; collecting, analyzing, and generating monthly data reports for divisions; developing strategies in collaboration with the divisional management teams to address issues with performance; and working closely with all divisions to identify training needs to address gaps in performance.

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Developed a case reading re-design process in Family Assistance that uses a sampling method to provide routine quality assurance for ongoing cases as well as evaluation of the completeness of closed cases for policy compliance.
- Implemented the initial phase of a Quality Control Parallel Process (QCPP) designed to test a random sampling method for selecting cases to identify improvements in the Quality Control process.
- In July 2014, a process was developed to track the timeliness of all external reports. Measurement of this goal began in September 2014. The goal was to use this process to increase timeliness to 97.41%, an increase of 2% from the original baseline of 95.41%, by September 2015. As of June 30th, 2015, 438 out of 445 external reports have been submitted timely, resulting in a current overall timeliness percentage of 98.43%.

## ***Research and Data Analysis***

The function of the Research and Data Analysis (R&DA) unit is to assist all other program units and operational areas of DHS in assessing their data needs and providing consistent, accurate and timely information to meet policy objectives and performance metrics pertinent to the mission of DHS. R&DA produces routine reporting across the program spectrum as well as ad hoc data for internal and external use. In addition, R&DA works with external partners to accommodate mutually beneficial research projects. QISS also provides oversight of the new Data Request Review Committee (DRRC) who provides responses to external requests for data from the department.

## ***Quality Control/Quality Assurance***

Quality Control (QC) is responsible for conducting a statistically valid sample of SNAP cases as required by United States Department of Agriculture and outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations. In addition, the Quality Control section is responsible for operating the State's Management Evaluation Plan. DHS Quality Control data enables the state to remain aware of its accuracy, identify trends, and prepare appropriate corrective actions.

Quality Assurance (QA) is responsible for completing quality case reviews for the SNAP and Families First programs. The reviews focus on areas such as benefit accuracy, timely processing, and case inconsistencies. The data produced by Quality Assurance is shared with field management staff monthly and identifies error trends by districts. Quality Assurance works in collaboration with program, field management and OLPD staff to identify training opportunities for front line staff to minimize the most common errors. The goal is to improve the SNAP error rates and reduce Families First federal reporting errors.

### **Accomplishments:**

- QC supported the SNAP program with quality case reviews that contributed to Tennessee's Active Error Rate being ranked #6 in the nation and most improved Case Procedural Error Rate.

## ***Centralized Policy and Planning***

The Centralized Policy & Planning Unit (CPPU), introduced at the end of the last fiscal year and staffed during the current fiscal year, has the responsibility of identifying and standardizing all departmental policies, procedures, manuals and forms. The unit facilitates the creation,

revision, review, approval and distribution of these documents, to support continuous quality, clarity and ready access to information. Having a centralized policy development process helps ensure timely and regular policy review, maintain consistency between documents, improve their accuracy, and aid in the communication of policy changes. The policy development process is a collaborative one that includes relevant program staff, subject matter experts, legal, executive leadership and training staff. This centralized policy development process is designed to be open and inclusive which helps staff be more aware of policy changes and ultimately improve the organization of and access to information.

**Accomplishments:**

- Created a structured policy development process. This process, although continuously improving, has been adopted by DHS and is the current approach to policy development and revision for all divisions. This fiscal year policies have been developed or revised utilizing this process, including a revised SNAP manual. Additional policies are currently in progress with a variety of programs.