

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING

OF THE

STOKES COUNTY

May 24, 2023

3:00 p.m.

BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST REMINDER:

In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every board member to avoid both conflicts of interest and appearances of conflict. Does any board member have any known conflict of interest or appearance of conflict with respect to any matters coming before board today? If so, please identify the conflict or appearance of conflict and refrain from any undue participation in the particular matter involved.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Discussion/Adjustments to the Agenda
- III. Consent Agenda
 - A. Minutes – Regular Meeting – April 26, 2023
- IV. Board Member Comments
- V. Public Comments (Maximum Allowance of Three Minutes Per Person)
- VI. Information and Discussion
 - A. Sarah Essic/Lisa Uber – Foster Home Licensing
 - B. DSS Dashboard
 - C. Child Support Consult – April 11, 2023
 - D. Child Day Care (DCDEE) Report – April 19, 2023
 - E. Continuous Quality Improvement Technical Assistance Report – Work First – May 11, 2023
 - F. Older Americans Month 2023 – Proclamation by BOCC
 - G. Foster Care Month 2023 – Proclamation by BOCC
 - H. Picture of Display Table at Little Folks Festival
 - I. Energy Programs Outreach Plan (Review and Approve/Sign)
- VII. Old Business
- VIII. New Business
 - Next meeting – June 28, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. in the DSS conference room
- IX. Adjournment



STOKES COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

MINUTES

April 26, 2023

The regular meeting of the Stokes County Board of Social Services was held on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at the Social Services Building in Danbury, North Carolina. Board members present were Chairman Jan Spencer, Vice Chairman Darlene Bullins, Member Greg Collins, Member Sandy Smith and Member Sonya Cox. Staff present were Director Stacey Elmes, Administrative Officer Becky East and Social Work Program Manager Kimberly Childress. Chairman Spencer called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Chairman Spencer read the Ethics and Conflict of Interest reminder to the Board. Board members were asked if they had a conflict with any of the items listed on the agenda. No conflicts noted.

Chairman Spencer opened the floor for any adjustments to today's agenda. Chairman Spencer made note that the date of the next meeting on the agenda is June 28, 2023 and should be May 24, 2023 as well as requested to add a closed session on today's agenda. Member Cox motioned to approve the agenda as amended. Member Smith seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Spencer entertained a motion to approve or amend the consent agenda which includes the minutes from the March 22, 2023 meeting. Vice Chairman Bullins made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Member Cox seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Board Member Comments

Chairman Spencer stated that the Child Abuse Awareness event on April 4, 2023 was a great experience along with a great turn-out. Member Collins along with other board members thanked Member Cox for putting together the items for today's employee appreciation meet and greet which was very nice.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Other items on the agenda for discussion were as follows:

DSS Dashboard

Director Elmes noted that the Food and Nutrition Application Timeliness percentage that was not available when the Dashboard was printed should be 96%. Director Elmes shared that the FNS unit is struggling right now because of vacancies. The FNS unit is budgeted to have seven Income Maintenance Caseworker (IMC) positions. On Monday, the unit will have three vacancies. When fully staffed, each worker carries approximately 450 cases. With three vacancies, that number will increase to about 850 cases per worker. Currently, the agency has two contract workers helping the FNS unit. This unit is at a disadvantage because these contract workers are not considered merit-based employees by the federal and state government; therefore, they cannot determine eligibility. The Board discussed the possibility of changing the contract workers to temporary part-time employees hoping it would make a difference. The Board gave Director Elmes consensus to move forward with this if allowable.

Director Elmes shared that the two Medicaid units (Adult and Family/Childrens) have a combined 9,013 cases with 13 IMC workers. Effective Monday, those two units will be fully staffed. When these units are fully staffed and trained, each worker would have approximately 693 cases which is a big load. The reason for two additional workers being requested in the proposed 2023-2024 budget is to help with Medicaid Expansion when it starts and as said in previous Board meetings, this may not be enough workers.

Director Elmes noted that current vacancies are as follows:

IMC (Medicaid) – one vacancy that will be filled on 5/1/23

IMC (FNS) – three vacancies with interviews on Friday

IMC (Med. Transportation) – one vacancy

Social Worker in Child Protective Services (CPS) – three vacancies with one vacancy to be filled in May

Social Worker in Foster Care – two vacancies

Foster Care Social Work Supervisor – one vacancy that will be filled on 5/8/23

Social Worker in Adult Services – one vacancy

The agency also has three employees out on Family Medical Leave.

The agency had four employees exiting employment in March: three retirements and one resignation for another opportunity.

Adult Services Survey Report State FY 2021-2022

Director Elmes shared this state report with the Board for their information. The report provides a blurb about each adult services program and where counties were during the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Chairman Spencer confirmed with Director Elmes that the numbers for substantiation and confirmation rates are at 38% for the county and 24% for the state. Vice Chairman Bullins confirmed with Director Elmes that the county did not receive funds for APS Essential Services in F/Y '21-'22 but did in F/Y '22-'23.

REDA Audit

Director Elmes stated that the agency passed the third month of the REDA Audit at 100% so the REDA Audit will not take place again until March 2024. Chairman Spencer expressed appreciation for a job well done to the employees in these units.

LME/MCO Dashboard Information

Director Elmes shared this information with the Board as Vaya Health is Stokes County's LME/MCO and this report shows how Vaya is doing with Medicaid Children in Inappropriate Crisis Settings; Medicaid Children in PRTFs; Consumers in State Psych. Hospitals Ready for Discharge; People on Innovations Waitlist Receiving Any Medicaid or State BH/IDD Service; and Follow-up Within 7 Days After Inpatient Discharge. Chairman Spencer noted the large number of children that Vaya has placed in inappropriate crisis settings in comparison to the other LME/MCO's.

Kudos to Bobbi McDowell

Director Elmes shared an email that was sent to agency employees to give kudos to Bobbi for being nominated for her work as a social worker by foster families for World Social Work Day, which was on 3/21/23.

April Child Abuse and Prevention Month Proclamation

Director Elmes provided a copy of the proclamation that the Board of County Commissioners signed on the 27th day of March in recognition of Child Abuse and Prevention Month. Director Elmes shared that the Ringing Bell event that the agency had on April 4th to bring awareness to Child Abuse and Prevention was a huge success. Three commissioners, two DSS Board members, two judges, the Sheriff, law enforcement officers, the Guardian Ad Litem supervisor/volunteers, providers, and Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA) representatives were just a few of those present. The agency plans for this to be an annual event.

Second Harvest Food Bank

Director Elmes shared that on May 20, 2023 Stokes County will have another Second Harvest Food Bank distribution. It will be held in the parking lots here at the Government Center.

Old Business

No old business to discuss.

New Business

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 24, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. in the DSS conference room.

Chairman Spencer entertained a motion to enter closed session. Vice Chairman Bullins moved to enter closed session for the following:

G.S. 143-318.11(a)

(6) To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee. General personnel policy issues may not be considered in a closed session. A public body may not consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, appointment, or removal of a member of the public body or another body and may not consider or fill a vacancy among its own membership except in an open meeting. Final action making an appointment or discharge or removal by a public body having final authority for the appointment or discharge, or removal shall be taken in an open meeting.

Member Collins seconded and the motion passed 5-0. The Board entered closed session. The board reentered open session.

Chairman Spencer made a motion to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners that Director Elmes be given a 7.5% increase in salary effective immediately based on her recent evaluation. Member Collins seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Director Elmes provided the Board with the following information regarding the recent federal/state Adoption Assistance Reviews:

January 25, 2023 – Adoption Assistance Review

- Fifteen cases were pulled in total to monitor three program areas:
 - IV-B Adoption Assistance
 - IV-E Adoption Assistance
 - Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)
- Findings:
 - SSBG cases were correct
 - Three of the IV-B cases were in error
 - Three of the IV-E cases were in error
- These errors included ineligible claims that were paid prior to the IV-E requirements being met, specifically no RIL (responsible individual list) check completed
- One case had an error of \$40,675 (October 2017-March 2023)
- Another case had an error of \$40,157 (June 2017-March 2023)
- With this being an official federal review, findings in the amount of \$80,832 must be paid back
- The agency was allowed to correct day sheets going back eight quarters for staff time involved
- Anything past eight quarters becomes county dollars
- On 3/16/2023, the agency sent in the PAR (payment adjustment referral) to show the state/federal reviewers that corrections were being made
- Additional day sheet training on coding will be provided to staff

- Administrative Officer East and Director Elmes completed a departmental budget review and were able to find the \$80,832 required payback
- A budget amendment was completed and approved by the Board of County Commissioners on March 27, 2023

February 9, 2023

- Foster care supervisor received an email from the state requesting information on an adoption assistance case
- Federal government asked the state to do a reporting of this program which is done annually, Stokes County just happened to have a case (random file choice) pulled
- This case was reported to be an applicable child; however, after review the child was determined not applicable based on age
- On the last page of the eligibility form, eligibility is noted to be IV-E, but IV-B is the correct funding source
- Agency was able to go back and correct funding for eight quarters, but the agency is in error \$64,232 that is not required to be paid back at this time

February 27, 2023 – Dear County Director Letter

- Stokes County was identified as having children coded to state adoption fund with decrees after 2011, which is incorrect
- Stokes County had 23 cases where information had to be uploaded to the state for review
- On 3/29/23, Director Elmes received an email stating that corrections must be made
- State assisted the agency making corrections going back eight quarters and changing funding categories
- Because of errors found during the reviews, Director Elmes requested that the state complete a 100% case review of the agency's Adoption Assistance Program (approximately 180 cases)

April 25, 2023 -100% Case Review of Adoption Assistance Program

- Five state employees came to Stokes County to review records (41 cases reviewed)
- Findings of the 41 cases reviewed:
 - 22 had errors – 54%
 - 6 had issues that needed to be fixed but not official errors – 14%
 - 13 had no errors – 32%
- State requested the agency review the remaining cases and correct any errors found
- State recommended that this be done quickly to stop the errors from continuing to cost county money moving forward

Member Cox confirmed with Director Elmes that there are things in place to prevent errors like this from happening in the future. Director Elmes stated that additional steps have been added at the beginning of an adoption case to determine if eligibility is correct before any service is initiated. Second party reviews of adoption assistance records will occur quarterly to ensure cases remain in compliance.

With no further business, Chairman Spencer entertained a motion to adjourn. Member Cox moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chairman Bullins seconded and the motion passed 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Stacey S. Elmes
Secretary

May 12, 2023
Date

Stokes County DSS Dashboard 2023

	April	May	June	Qrt. Total	Annual Total
ADULT SOCIAL WORK SERVICES					
Guardianship Cases	32				
New APS Reports Received	12			12	49
APS Reports Accepted	8			8	26
Investigations Initiated Timely [Goal 95%]	100%				
Outreach Visits	4			4	19
In Home Aide Programs	9				
Community Alternatives Program (CAP/DA)	54				
Representative Payee	7				
SA - In-Home	51				
Placement	0				
Adult Care Homes Monitored	1				
Total Requests for CIP	26			26	131
CIP Expenditures	\$1,800			\$1,800	\$14,750
Total Requests for LIEAP & LIEWAP	15			15	379
LIEAP Expenditures	\$0			\$0	\$62,797
Unclaimed Bodies	0			0	1
Staff Hours Spent at Shelters	0			0	0
CHILD CARE SUBSIDY					
Children Receiving Services <input type="checkbox"/>	148				
Expenditures	\$69,028			\$69,028	\$264,649
Waiting List	0				
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES					
CPS Reports Received	48			48	215
CPS Reports Accepted	23			23	116
Children Opened	42			42	225
Open Reports	33				
Reports Substantiated/Services Needed	5				
Open Case Management	17				
Courtesy Requests	5			5	17
Substance Affected Infants Reported to DSS	3			3	4
Substance Affected Infants Accepted for Inv.	3			3	4
Reports Initiated Timely [Goal 95%]	100%				
Reports Completed Timely [Goal 75%]	86%				
Children Remaining at Home [Goal 95%]	98%				
CHILD SUPPORT					
Number of Children Served	1,020				
Total Collections	\$177,801			\$177,801	\$706,328
Paternities Established	8			8	37
New Court Orders	9			9	47
FISHING LICENSE WAIVERS					
Fishing License Waivers	12			12	23
FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES					
Total Households	3,398				
Total Individuals	6,689				
Report Card (App. Timeliness) [Goal: 95%]	97%				
Report Card (Recert. Timeliness) [Goal: 95%]					
Benefits Distributed	\$ 1,014,295			\$1,014,295	\$5,721,433

2023	April	May	June	Qtr. Total	Annual Total
FOSTER CARE					
Children Entering Care	1			1	16
Total Children in Care	97				
Children Discharged	3			3	20
Children in Care Over 1 Year	51				
% Receiving a Monthly Visit [Goal 100%]	98%				
% Visited in the Home [Goal > 90%]	93%				
Foster Care 18-21	6				
Monitoring of Children No Longer in Custody	1				
Licensed Foster Homes	13				
Sanctioned Homes	1				
# of Individuals/Families Receiving Training	8 ind/5 fam				
Recruitment Events Held	1			1	14
Foster Care Costs (county/state/fed)	\$112,145			\$112,145	\$359,649
Children Free For Adoption	15				
Children Open for LINKS	90				
Adoptions Completed	1			1	8
Adoption Assistance Cases	195				
Adoption Assistance Costs (fed & state)	\$618			\$618	\$14,288
MEDICAID [ADULT, FAMILY & CHILDREN'S]					
# of Cases	9,013				
Report Card (Timeliness) [Goal: 85%]	98%				
Public Assistance Hearings (All Areas)	1				
MEDICAID TRANSPORTATION					
Clients Served	205				
Trips Provided	1,328			1,328	4,582
Monthly Cost	\$48,330			\$48,330	\$199,037
PROGRAM INTEGRITY					
New Claims Established	\$ 1,128			\$ 1,128	\$10,581
Total Collections	\$482			\$482	\$3,601
Retained in County	\$156			\$156	\$2,946
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE					
# of Special Assistance Cases	127				
Benefits Distributed	\$53,610			\$53,610	\$204,520
SA/MH LIAISON					
Number of Referrals during the Month	8			8	32
Open Cases at end of Month	38				
VACANCIES					
Social Work	6				
Clerical/Income Maintenance/Child Support	4				
WORK FIRST					
Total Work First Cases	47				
Number of Child Only Cases	47				
Employment Cases	0				
Benefits Distributed	\$9,640			\$9,640	\$38,926
OTHER					
Voter Registrations	1			1	6
Walk-In Traffic	785			785	3,321



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

SUSAN G. OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County Operations for
Human Services

Stacey Elmes, DSS Director
Stokes County Department of Social Services
1010 State Hwy 8
Danbury, N.C. 27016

May 1, 2023

Dear Ms. Elmes:

On April 11, 2023, Jennifer and I conduct a conference to discuss statistical information, information updates, and county concern.

Incentive statistics are available through March 2023. The benchmark for March Total Collection is 75%. The unit is below the State Average for Total Collections (72.96%) at 67.99%. The unit has achieved/exceeded the 2022-23 goals in the areas of Paternity (99%) at 101.79% and Cases Under Order (89.00%) at 90.98%. The unit has fallen just below the goal in the area of Current Collection (68.51%) at 68.18%. The unit is OFF track in the area of Arrears Collection (66.41%) at 60.29%. Last year at this time the unit was at 61.13%. I will continue to suggest reports that may increase incentive areas. Reports suggested/provided: Establishment Report, Paternity, Undistributed, and % of Cases with Arrears, no payment.

Goals 2022-23					
TC	Paternity	CUO	CC	Arrears	Medical
\$2,235,502.45	99	89	68.51	66.41	
Current	03/23				
67.99<	101.79>*	90.98>*	68.18>	60.29<	86.63>

*-Exceeding/achieving goal

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES • CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 20800, Raleigh, NC 27619
www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-855-4755 • FAX: 919-715-8174

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Self-Assessment scores are available through March 2023. The unit is currently in compliance with three of nine areas of Self-Assessment. The unit has been able to bring the area of Establishment at 80.67%. This is excellent work! The unit is out of compliance in the area of Six month Expedite at 57.69% , Interstate at 72% and Medical 73.43%. Compliance in these areas is 75%. Each of the deficient areas have seen increase. All other areas have a compliance level of 76% or better. Reports suggested/provided: P/F for Six Month Expedite, Interstate and Medical.

Management advises that the unit is taking advantage of the virtual training that are being offered. Reports were discussed. I continue working with management on reports and CSS information.

A quality review of child support cases was completed. Cases are reviewed for quality, data reliability, and supporting documents. The outcome of our follow-up monitoring is outlined below. The Stokes County Child Support office is currently performing overall at 96.25%. All the cases met the quality review criteria, and all cases were sent to the Child Support Managers for review.

Number of Cases Reviewed	Month	Monthly Quality Review Score	Notes	Date to Correct Case(s)
3	April	100%	Copy of QR sent to CS Managers	N/A

Should you have any questions about the items discussed during my visit or addressed in this email, please email (Kenya.Newsome@dhhs.nc.gov) or call me at (336)788-5857.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Kenya Newsome
Child Support Program Representative

Cc:
Jennifer Bennet
Cindy Amos

**DIVISION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY EDUCATION
SUBSIDY SERVICES SECTION
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE VISIT REPORT**

LPA: Stokes County Department of Social Services
DATE OF CONTACT: April 19, 2023 – Microsoft Teams Meeting
LPA STAFF: Cindy Amos, Cindy Hodges, and Laken Cooke
SERVICES CONSULTANT: Belinda Thomas

FUNDING MANAGEMENT

Direct Services

Non-Smart Start

- Non-Smart Start allocation for direct services is \$1,109,191.
- The Non-Smart Start expenditure for the February 2023 service month was \$55,629.
- The Non-Smart Start spending target for the March 2023 service month was \$228,249.
- The current Non-Smart Start spending coefficient is 53%.

Smart Start

- Smart Start allocation for direct services is \$251,772.
- The Smart Start expenditure for the February 2023 service month was \$19,236.
- The Smart Start spending target for the March 2023 service month was \$14,642.
- The current Smart Start spending coefficient is 105%.

Combined

- The combined allocation for direct services is \$1,360,963.
- The combined expenditure for the February 2023 service month was \$74,865.
- The combined spending target for the March 2023 service month was \$242,892.
- The current Combined spending coefficient is 63%.

Services Support

Non-Smart Start

- Direct Services Support allocation is \$80,000.
- The Direct Services Support expenditure is \$54,419.
- Balance of \$25,581 anticipated to be spent in full by the end of the fiscal year.

Smart Start

- Direct Services Support allocation is \$0.
- The services support expenditure is \$0.
- The agency does not receive Smart Start services support funds.

Vulnerable Population Set-Aside

- County Vulnerable Population Set Aside amount is \$41,505.
- County has spent \$7,669 of their Vulnerable Population Set Aside funds.

WAITING LIST

Number of Children on the Waiting List: 0

ACTION NEEDED

- In NC FAST, funds are ranked as Special Needs #1, Non-Smart Start #2, and Smart Start #3.
- Continue to transfer obligations between Smart Start and Non-Smart Start as needed to ensure Smart Start funds are spent, but not overspent. Staff should also continue to monitor the monthly enhancements to determine the amount needed each month to pay the enhancements through the end of the fiscal year. The LPA Fund Manager will need to transfer obligations from Smart Start to Non-Smart Start to balance the expenditures and allow funds to pay enhancements through the May service month. The funds can be transferred/obligated by the last day of the month to change the fund source in that service month.
- The agency does not have an active waiting list.
- Stokes County received IV-E funds in the amount of \$20,180 in the third quarter of the state fiscal year (SFY). The IV-E funds received for the fiscal year thus far are \$71,566.
- The preliminary expenditure report for March services paid in April was provided. The Smart Start spending coefficient is 101%, and the combined spending coefficient is 62%. The Smart Start target for April services is \$14,363.

SMART START COLLABORATION

Both agencies collaborate well and are very supportive of one another. There is a signed Smart Start Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for state fiscal year 2022-23.

WAITING LIST LOCAL POLICIES

Approved by:

- DCDEE – May 2020
- DSS Board – March 2020

RECORD REVIEW

No records were reviewed for this quarter.

Finding(s)

Not Applicable (N/A)

Corrective Action(s)

N/A

COMPLIANCE SCORING

N/A

POLICY DISCUSSION

Review of Policies

- The need for care should be verified and clearly documented in the case notes. Always provide any additional information pertaining to the need for care in the case notes. If a child receives care to support developmental needs, describe the type of delay or risk of delay as well as the reason the child may have developmental delays. It is always best to

obtain a written statement from a doctor, child care provider, school counselor, or someone who can verify the child has delays or the child is at risk for having delays. If a child receives care to support the need for education, document the need and include the school schedule in the case. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

- If a referral is received from children's services to authorize care to support child welfare services (CWS), the responsible adult must sign the SCCA paperwork. When a child is removed from the home/parent and placed with another responsible adult, the case is not considered child protective services (CPS) and the need for care is CWS for the SCCA program.
- The child must remain in his/her own home with the parent for the case to be considered CPS. For CPS cases, the parent must sign the SCCA documents, and the parent is the case head.
- For CPS and CWS cases, the base period income should be verified, calculated, and entered in the system. A parental fee should be established. The parental fee is then waived until the need for CPS or CWS ends. Once the CPS or CWS need ends, the parental fee can be assessed to the family. If the income information is not collected from the family at the time of eligibility determination, a parental fee cannot be assessed to the family until the next redetermination at the end of the 12-month certification period. If the income information cannot be obtained, the application and subsequent services should continue without the income information. Refer to Administrative Letter #06-18.
- If income is not representative of ongoing income, the worker should document the reason the income is not representative. If the information cannot be obtained, but sufficient wages have been provided to show representative income, document the reason the missing income could not be provided and use the best, representative income. If some check stubs show an old pay rate, and the most recent check stubs show a higher pay rate due to the client receiving a pay raise, use the verified income with the new pay raise as representative, ongoing income.
- Staff should remember to review the online verification system (OVS) for unearned income and enter the income and benefit evidence for everyone in the income unit if applicable. The case notes should also describe the income that was verified via OVS. Remember to use the correct base period for child support. If a client receives Social Security benefits (SSA), enter the monthly benefit amount in the benefit evidence. If there is non-countable income such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the benefit income should be entered in the NC FAST evidence and the system does not count SSI.
- When determining the hours of care and/or level of care, staff should review the information provided on check stubs, wage verification forms, the work number, etc. to average the hours and determine the level of care. The worker should also consider travel time, study time, and other factors when determining the hours and level of care. Many times, the worker should discuss the child care hours with the client to better determine the hours and level of care to be authorized. A client may have a family member to pick up the child at the facility, or the client may need additional travel time if he/she works in another county. If the hours of care authorized, differ from the hours of care noted on the recertification packet or a referral from children's services, document the reason. As a reminder, only use schedule varies when days and hours cannot be determined because a client does not have a set schedule. There may be other times when a range of hours for certain days will be appropriate, and the days and range of hours can be entered. If the

range of hours will exceed the appropriate level of care to be authorized, document the information in the case notes to justify entering 'schedule varies' in the plan of care. Always document the authorized level of care in the case notes to justify the information entered in the plan of care.

- Blended rates are payment rates for children ages three years old and older who receive Subsidized Child Care Assistance from a single provider for before and/or after school care; full-time summer care; and full-time (100%) care on holidays, teacher workdays, inclement weather days, and school closings. Enter accurate information in the Plan of Care evidence for the correct determination of blended rates. The provider must be eligible to accept the blended rate by offering at least one of the three care features (holidays, teacher workdays, and inclement weather days) and summer care. The worker can determine if the provider is eligible to receive the blended rate by searching the provider in NC FAST by viewing the financial tab, contracts folder, and annual agreement folder. The services and additional care features are displayed. Please refer to the blended rate document provided by the technical assistance consultant.
- When the Social Security Benefit (SSA) is verified in the online verification system (OVS), the worker should count the received amount rather than the gross amount if both amounts are not the same.
- Administrative Letter, #01-23 was sent to counties on April 19, 2023, to provide new policy guidance for applications, recertifications, base periods, and calculation of income. The new policy will be effective May 1, 2023.

NC FAST ISSUE(S)

Staff continues to review the weekly communications.

- If county staff needs to respond to an email from NC FAST staff regarding a help desk ticket or issue, staff should go into ServiceNow, find their ticket, and then respond to the email that way. The information technology (IT) Service Desk email goes to a large chain, and it does not go to the specific person assisting with the issue.
- February 13, 2023: Child care workers should not submit a recertification until they receive an accurate eligibility check when completing a recertification.
- February 27, 2023: When reacting to changes on a case, child care workers should review information entered, apply changes, then accept pending decisions as a final step.
- March 6, 2023: Child care workers will no longer receive an unhandled server error message when attempting to search within the 'Manage Waiting List' page.
- March 20, 2023: Child care workers can now add Work First clients on the waiting list, when needed.
- April 10, 2023: NC FAST is aware of an issue with users receiving 'error during obligating funds' message after trying to sign a voucher when the school age child has Special Needs evidence starting mid-month. Until this issue is resolved, counties should follow the Temporary Process Change of updating the Special Needs evidence to the beginning of the first of the month.

PROVIDER ISSUE(S)

N/A

OTHER DISCUSSION

- A Dear County Director Letter (DCDL) #01-23 was issued in February 2023. Due to statewide underspending, counties should continue to take applications and serve children using Non-Smart Start funds. Waiting lists should not be put in place at this time.
- The technical assistance (TA) territory training is available on Moodle now. Staff can view the presentation and the question and answer (Q&A) document. To view the training materials, go to the Division of Child Development and Early Education website. Click on Services, Moodle, Subsidy, and Subsidized Child Care Assistance (SCCA) TA Territory Trainings.
- A territory meeting will be held on April 20, 2023. A flyer was sent on February 22, 2023, to save the date.
- I shared some training materials with Cindy Amos and Laken Cooke. We can schedule a meeting via Teams for additional training.

FOLLOW-UP TASKS FOR LPA STAFF BEFORE NEXT VISIT

N/A

FOLLOW-UP TASKS FOR SERVICES CONSULTANT BEFORE NEXT VISIT

N/A

TENTATIVE DATE OF NEXT VISIT

July 25, 2023 - Via Microsoft Teams

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Team Technical Assistance Report
for Stokes County Department of Social Services

State Participants:	<i>Lisabeth Sumner, CQI Specialist</i>	
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Local Agency Participants	Title	Area(s) of Responsibility
Cindy Amos	IM Supervisor	Work First (WF), Family & Childrens Medicaid

On May 11, 2023, **Lisabeth Sumner** from the NC Division of Social Services, CQI Specialist Team, conducted a consultation to provide technical assistance to **Stokes County Department of Social Services** Economic Services Program Staff. The CQI Specialists conducted a review of the following information to target the technical assistance to meet the needs of the local agency.

Stokes County Economic Services Data and Statistics:

Measurement:	Percentage/Total:	Period:
WF Applications Timeliness	100%	April-2023
WF Recertification Timeliness	100%	April-2023
WF Case Data	46	April-2023
WF Applications	2	April-2023

Timeliness and Work First Participation

Work First

The CQI Specialist reviewed the WF application and recertification timeliness reports with staff. The county had two timely applications to process the month of April and one timely recertification. Management was commended on meeting the threshold of 95% or above on application and recertification timeliness. At the time of consult county had one timely pending application and six recertifications to process. County has forty-six WF cases, all child only. WF reports should continue to be monitored to ensure no overdue applications and recertifications. WF participation rates (PR), will need to be tracked manually for work eligible cases. PR reports in CSDW are not slated to be updated due to submitting the entire universe (all cases).

General Discussion:

- The supervisor stated the regional meeting in April was beneficial. CQI informed county that the PowerPoints and Q&A were currently being compiled and would be sent out soon.
- Went over the importance of the ACF-199 report. The ACF-199 is our federal reporting process that determines the State's Participation Rate, which in turn is critical to the amounts of TANF funding drawn down by the state and ultimately the local agencies. Please encourage the Work First workers to incorporate reviewing the three most common error elements. 1. Marital status 2. Education Errors 3. Subsidized Housing, to make sure all are correct when reviewing records.
- Advised Supervisor/workers to review the Entering Work First Time Limit Extension Evidence to ensure that the start date of extension evidence and sanctions are correct. If workers note different start dates, the cases should be reviewed for accuracy and proceed according to the directions in the Dear County Director's letter (EFS-WF-2-2023), Work First Cash Assistance COVID-19 Federal Public Health Emergency for guidance.

Business Process Changes

No new changes since the previous meeting.

Training Needs

Not discussed during this consultation.

Program Policy / Functionality Updates

The CQI Specialists provided updates and clarifications regarding WF policy, NC FAST System Functionality including outstanding Help Desk tickets, Weekly Communications, and DSS Terminal Messages. Those updates included discussion of the following:

List Serv Message:

- 2023-23- Exhausted 60-Month Federal Time Limits.

Dear County Director Letter:

- EFS_WF_2023- Work First Cash Assistance COVID-19 Federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) ends.

NCFAST:

- 5/8/2023- Cash Assistance Automatic Payments Release for Benefit Month of April 2023 has been completed. Counties can find reports posted on Fast Help home page located under 5/2/23.
- 5/8/23- The Cash Specific Termination Report for April 2023 has been completed. Counties can find reports posted on the Fast Help homepage under 5/2/23.

*Reminded Supervisor to be sure to check the NCFAST Weekly Communications for Cash Assistance Updates.

Staff Concerns

CQI was asked about the process for substance abuse screening and referral processes.

Follow-up

The next meeting will held via Micro Soft Teams on June 8, 2023 at 11:00am.

Older Americans Month 2023

A Proclamation

Whereas, Stokes County includes a growing number of older Americans who contribute their time, wisdom, and experience to our community; and

Whereas, communities benefit when people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds have the opportunity to participate and live independently; and

Whereas, Stokes County recognizes the need to create a community that offers the services and supports older adults may need to make choices about how they age; and

Whereas, Stokes County can work to build an even better community for our older residents by:

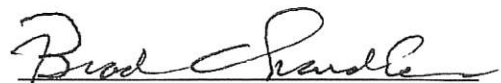
- Not limiting our thinking about aging,
- Exploring and combating stereotypes,
- Emphasizing the many positive aspects of aging,
- Inspiring older adults to push past traditional boundaries, and
- Embracing our community's diversity.

Now, therefore, the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners do hereby proclaim May 2023 to be Older Americans Month. We urge every resident to celebrate our older citizens, help to create an inclusive society, and accept the challenge of flexible thinking around aging.

Dated this 24th day of April, 2023.




Chairman Rick Morris



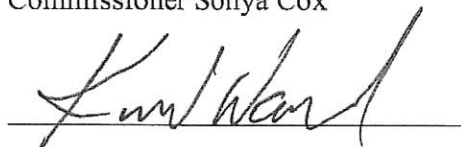
Vice-Chairman Brad Chandler



Commissioner Sonya Cox



Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall



Commissioner Keith Wood



Clerk to the Board Amber Brown



Foster Care Month Proclamation – May 2023

Whereas, the youth of Stokes County are our most precious resource and hope for the future, and all children deserve a safe, loving, and nurturing place to call home; and

Whereas, children have a right to thrive, learn and grow in a safe and loving environment; and

Whereas, the primary goal of foster care is to provide safe, secure, and stable homes through the compassion and nurturing of a foster family or kinship family; and

Whereas, foster parents provide the love, safety, and stability that children need in order to overcome past traumatic experiences in order to reach their full potential; and

Whereas, Stokes County currently has 97 children and youth in foster care being cared for in foster homes, group homes, and kinship/family homes throughout the state and beyond; and

Whereas, we must come together as a community to recognize the important role foster parents play in caring for children who have experienced abuse and neglect, supporting family reunification and building strong communities; and

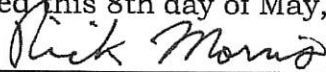
Whereas, there is a desperate need for foster parents in order to ensure all children – especially older youth, children with complex needs, and siblings – have a safe, stable home in their community; and

Whereas, there are numerous individuals, nonprofit organizations and public servants who are dedicated to raising awareness about the needs of children and youth in foster care; and

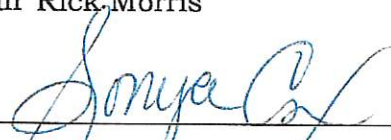
Whereas, through partnerships with families, child welfare staff, and public and private agencies, there is a collaborative effort to ensure that children are supported and successful;

Now, therefore, we, the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim May 2023 as Foster Care Month in Stokes County and urge all citizens to recognize the foster parents, child welfare professionals, and advocates working to ensure children's safety, well-being, and permanence, and to spread awareness on behalf of the thousands of children in foster care in North Carolina.

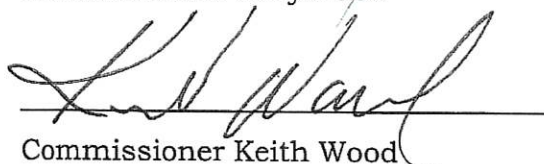
Dated this 8th day of May, 2023.



Chair Rick Morris



Commissioner Sonya Cox



Commissioner Keith Wood



Vice-Chair Brad Chandler



Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall



Clerk to the Board Amber Brown

DSS Table at the Little Folks Festival, May 6, 2023.



ENERGY PROGRAMS OUTREACH PLAN

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded block grant program that is comprised of three different programs - Crisis Intervention Program (CIP), Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and Weatherization. There are also non-Federal Crisis Intervention Programs - Energy Neighbor, Share the Warmth, Wake Electric Round Up, and Helping Each Member Cope.

To maximize the success of this program, outreach to county residents through key community partner stakeholders, each county department of social services is required to develop and implement an Energy Program Outreach Plan (EPOP). This plan is a framework to assure that eligible households are made aware of the assistance available through these programs.

The county director and/or his/her designee is required to develop the EPOP, which addresses outreach and application activities related to the Energy Programs. The Outreach Plan is due to North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) by July 24, 2023.

Each county must form an outreach planning committee that creates the opportunity for county level collaboration to discuss and plan how to effectively reach county residents to inform them of the services provided by the energy programs. The committee should meet at least twice yearly; September for outreach planning related to LIEAP and April to review the outcomes related to LIEAP and to plan for outreach activities for summer weather. Energy Assistance Outreach Plan

Answer all questions below. Address CIP, non-Federal CIP, and LIEAP where appropriate:

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Director of Social Services should engage a number of various community partners such as Vendors, Housing Authority, Public Libraries, Public School System/Local Colleges/Head Start, Legal Services, Meals on Wheels, Media, Public Health/Health Centers, Churches, Food Banks, Councils on Aging/Senior Centers, Community based Indian organizations, Volunteer Programs, Vocational Rehabilitation Offices, and Transportation, services, etc.

1. Provide a list of committee members and their agencies.

Donna Martin - Stokes County DSS

Vicky East - Senior Services

Sheila O'Neal - King Outreach Ministry

Amanda Dodson - East Stokes Outreach Ministry

Tammy Martin - Stokes County Health Department

Brandon Gentry - Stokes County EMS

Dr. Brad Rice - Stokes County Schools

Mike Wall - Vocational Rehabilitation

Jeff Cockerham - YVEDDI

2. Provide potential meeting dates, times, locations, as well as agenda topics.

Meetings will be held on September 25th and April 22nd at 10:00am. Meetings will be virtual, by telephone and through electronic email. Agenda topics will include Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) and Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP).

Define how DSS/DHS will work with the committee as well as any other agencies to collaborate regarding the Energy Program and how outreach will be provided to the citizens in your area.

Agencies will be made aware of programs and eligibility criteria. Information will be made available to citizens and information will be available to partner agencies and published on website.

1. What is the process for referring customers? What marketing tools or items will be used (please provide a copy of your previous marketing materials & how you plan to enhance those in the future)?
Flyers will be available to the community and partner agencies. The information is shared through website and social media.
-

2. What strategy does the county have, to continue collaborative efforts with community partners to complete outreach activities to target potential eligible households including individuals and families?
DSS will continue with direct communication with our partners to assure outreach efforts are utilized.
-

3. What additional activities will be conducted to target households with members with children under 5, age 60 and over and disabled?
N/A
-

Media involvement is vital to the success to outreach activities. How will your county utilize media such as newspapers, social media, radio and television stations to publicize the Energy Programs?

Information is provided to the local newspaper and is put on the county website. The partner

agencies will continue to post information on their websites. Information is also shared on

Facebook.

1. Provide a list of media outlets that will be used as well as timeframes in which they will be contacted (provide examples of how the county can enhance these efforts):

The Stokes News - Information is shared beginning in October .

Facebook - Information is shared on the DSS page, partner agencies and personal page.

Partner Websites - Will begin sharing in October.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

Counties are required to provide application processes for CIP, non-Federal CIP programs, and/or LIEAP. This information must be reported to the NCDHHS annually.

1. Provide hours of operation, location and whether the programs are in house or contracted out. If your agency contracts out to other agencies attach the contract(s).

Stokes County DSS, 1010 Main Street Danbury, NC 27016

Monday through Friday- 8:30am - 5:00pm (open late 4th Thursday of each month)

Programs are in house.

BEST PRACTICES:

Best practices are a method or technique that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives because it produces results. Best practices are essential to the program.

1. If your county has gone above and beyond what is listed on this form please provide this information below:

N/A

2. Any additional comments or activities for CIP, non-Federal CIP, and/or LIEAP:

N/A

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Your contact information is essential to the success of the Energy Programs. Please complete the following information.

Name: Donna Martin, Adult Services Supervisor

Address: PO Box 30, Danbury, NC 27016

Telephone: 336-593-2861

Email: dlmartin@co.stokes.nc.us

Please indicate which program:

☒ LIEAP

☒ CIP

This plan must be approved by the local Board of Social Services/Human Services Board or local agency governing body prior to submission. Refer to the latest Dear County Director Letter for instructions on how to submit this document to the North Carolina State office.

Board of Social Services/Human Services or governing body Signature

Date

Director's Signature

Date