



April 19, 2024

MEMORANDUM

TO: Wanika B. Fisher, Chair
Health, Human Services and Public Safety Committee

THRU: Joseph R. Hamlin 
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: David Noto 
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Department of Social Services
Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Review

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is a quasi-State agency and receives most of its funds and personnel directly from the State. These funds are not reported in the County Budget because they are not grants, but direct funding. This Report focuses on the County's portion of the Department's overall budget unless specified otherwise. In FY 2025, DSS's Total Budget, inclusive of direct State funds accounts, is \$74,595,325, with \$45,660,225 funded directly by the State.

Budget Overview

- The FY 2025 proposed budget for DSS is \$28,366,400, a decrease of \$4,467,400 or 14.1% under the FY 2024 approved budget.

Budget Comparison – Revenues

Fiscal Year 2021 to Proposed Fiscal Year 2025

Actual Fiscal Year 2021 to Proposed Fiscal Year 2025

Fund	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
General Fund	\$ 5,739,208	\$ 5,077,331	\$ 6,175,213	\$ 9,719,100	\$ 9,588,800	\$ (130,300)	-1.3%
Grants	\$ 12,678,123	\$ 14,012,134	\$ 16,896,814	\$ 23,314,700	\$ 18,777,600	\$ (4,537,100)	-19.5%
Total	\$ 18,417,331	\$ 19,089,465	\$ 23,072,027	\$ 33,033,800	\$ 28,366,400	\$ (4,667,400)	-14.1%

General Fund

- The FY 2025 proposed General Fund budget for DSS is \$9,588,800, a decrease of \$130,300 or 1.3% under the FY 2024 approved budget. DSS's FY 2025 General Fund proposed spending is comprised of \$2,887,400 of funds allocated for compensation, \$747,800 allocated for fringe benefits, and the remaining \$5,953,600 allocated for operating expenses. Increases in spending come from OIT charges based on anticipated countywide costs for technology, and in charges stemming from scheduled fleet maintenance. Decreases come from fringe benefits to align with projected costs, employee training costs and an increase in budgeted salary lapse, but this is offset by the annualization of FY 2024 salary adjustments.

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
Compensation	\$ 1,400,038	\$ 1,506,328	\$ 2,308,097	\$ 3,000,400	\$ 2,887,400	\$ (113,000)	-3.8%
Fringe Benefits	\$ 438,761	\$ 428,087	\$ 567,141	\$ 765,100	\$ 747,800	\$ (17,300)	-2.3%
Operating Expense	\$ 3,900,409	\$ 3,142,916	\$ 3,299,975	\$ 5,953,600	\$ 5,953,600	\$ -	0.0%
Total	\$ 5,739,208	\$ 5,077,331	\$ 6,175,213	\$ 9,719,100	\$ 9,588,800	\$ (130,300)	-1.34%

Budget Comparison – Expenditures

Compensation

- In FY 2025, General Fund compensation expenditures decrease 3.8% under the FY 2024 budget due to an increase in budgeted salary lapse offset by the annualization of FY 2024 salary adjustments. Funding is provided for State salary supplements and grant cash match funding. Compensation costs include funding 29 full-time positions.

Fringe Benefits

- In FY 2025, General Fund fringe benefit expenditures are proposed to decrease by \$17,300, or 2.3% below the FY 2024 approved budget level to align with compensation adjustments and anticipated costs. Despite this decrease in spending, the fringe benefit rate will increase from 25.5% to 25.9%.

Operating Expenses

- Operating expenditures remain unchanged from the FY 2024 approved level. Funding continues to support activities for the Food Equity and Food Insecurity Taskforce and the Maryland Money Market Double Value Coupon Program.

Operating Expenses						
Commitment Item	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Proposed	\$ Change
Telephone	\$ 49,039	\$ 32,013	\$ 20,961	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ -
Printing	\$ 1,421	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Utilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 994	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Office Automation	\$ 254,200	\$ 292,300	\$ 310,600	\$ 356,000	\$ 374,900	\$ 18,900
Training	\$ 2,082	\$ 355	\$ 8,689	\$ 65,000	\$ 34,000	\$ (31,000)
Advertising	\$ 2,900	\$ 984	\$ 3,987	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,200	\$ -
Travel: Non-Training	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 949	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ -
Membership Fees	\$ 2,578	\$ 1,598	\$ 3,190	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ -
Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 186	\$ 780	\$ 125	\$ 900	\$ 900	\$ -
General & Administrative Contracts	\$ 4,941	\$ 107,380	\$ 81,437	\$ 32,400	\$ 32,400	\$ -
Operating Contracts	\$ 1,364,423	\$ 1,949,726	\$ 1,985,229	\$ 4,566,500	\$ 4,566,500	\$ -
General Office Supplies	\$ 11,662	\$ 13,479	\$ 72,123	\$ 29,000	\$ 29,000	\$ -
Non-Capital Office & Operating Equipment	\$ 264	\$ 6,879	\$ 10,182	\$ 7,400	\$ 7,400	\$ -
Other Operating Equipment Repair/ Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 975	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Vehicle Equipment Repair/ Maintenance	\$ 44,100	\$ 31,850	\$ 55,050	\$ 65,400	\$ 77,500	\$ 12,100
Gas and Oil	\$ 6,621	\$ 13,174	\$ 12,049	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment Lease	\$ 361,390	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Office/ Building Rental/ Lease	\$ 1,364,263	\$ 298,620	\$ 24,694	\$ 306,400	\$ 306,400	\$ -
Debt Service	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 121,355	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Grants/ Contributions	\$ 404,363	\$ 396,036	\$ 584,173	\$ 493,800	\$ 493,800	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 25,976	\$ (2,258)	\$ 3,213	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total	\$ 3,900,409	\$ 3,142,916	\$ 3,299,975	\$ 5,953,600	\$ 5,953,600	\$ -

Grants

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
Compensation	\$ 5,431,263	\$ 5,037,695	\$ 5,402,532	\$ 9,558,600	\$ 7,879,900	\$ (1,678,700)	-17.6%
Fringe Benefits	\$ 644,860	\$ 627,262	\$ 689,081	\$ 1,433,800	\$ 1,182,000	\$ (251,800)	-17.6%
Operating Expenses	\$ 6,847,444	\$ 8,478,038	\$ 10,513,096	\$ 13,062,900	\$ 10,284,400	\$ (2,778,500)	-21.3%
Capital Outlay	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 660,031	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Total	\$12,923,567	\$14,142,995	\$17,264,740	\$24,055,300	\$19,346,300	-\$4,709,000	-19.6%

- The FY 2025 proposed grant budget for the Department of Social Services is \$18,777,600, a decrease of \$4,537,600 or 19.5% under the FY 2024 approved budget. This does not include the \$568,700 County Cash Match Obligation for the grants, which comes out of the General Fund. Once that the County Cash Match Obligation has been added, the complete proposed FY 2025 grant budget is \$19,346,300, a decrease of \$4,709,000 or 19.6% under the FY 2024 approved budget. This decrease is primarily associated with the reduction in funding for the American Rescue Plan Act – Regular (ARPA-R), Low Income Household Water Assistance Program, Emergency Food and Shelter ARPA-R, Multimedia Learning Library, Affordable Care Act- Connector Program, Foster Youth Summer Employment, National Subgrants Program Spanish Speaking Interpreter and Permanent Housing for Unsheltered programs. Major sources of funds in the FY 2025 proposed budget include:
 - Welfare Reform - Work Opportunities
 - Office of Strategic Partnerships and Child Advocacy
 - Homelessness Solutions
- DSS does not anticipate returning any grant money in FY 2024.
- Out of the 24 grant funded programs included in the FY 2025 Proposed Budget, the following five (5) have the largest budgets:
 - ***Welfare Reform Work Opportunities/Block Grant Funds Program 02, 08, 10*** – The Maryland Department of Human Resources provides \$5,516,400 in funding to support the cost of providing employment-related assistance to clients of various benefit programs. Job development, referrals, placements, and job-seeking skills training are some of the components of this initiative which seeks to reduce welfare dependency through employment. This approximate level of funding has been available to organizations in Prince George’s County in past years but has been spent through State contracts with vendors.
 - ***Office of Strategic Partnerships and Community Solutions*** – The Prince George’s County Public Schools provides \$2,542,700 in funding to place school and community engagement advocates in schools with challenging dynamics (academic performance, truancy, or suspension rate) to support student success. Advocates assess family needs, identify and connect families to resources that address barriers to student achievement and foster family stability through individualized case management.
 - ***Homelessness Solutions*** – The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development provides \$1,710,000 in funding for outreach, emergency shelters, homeless stabilization services and the Homelessness Management Information System.
 - ***Affordable Care Act-Connector Program*** – The Maryland Department of Human Resources provides \$1,700,000 in funding to coordinate outreach activities to reach uninsured individuals and small businesses in Prince George’s County.
 - ***Office of Home Energy Programs – Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP)*** – The Maryland Department of Human Resources provides \$1,650,000 in funding to assist low-income families in meeting the

high costs of winter energy bills. Benefits are distributed to utilities, fuel suppliers and landlords on behalf of needy families (those with incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level).

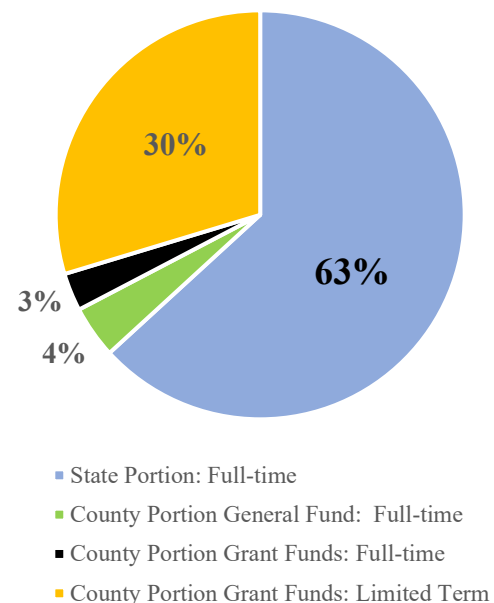
- In FY 2025, funding is provided for 21 full time and 208 limited term grant funded (LTGF) positions. While the total number of proposed grant funded positions remains unchanged from FY 2024, there is a reallocation of six (6) positions from the LTGF category to the full-time Grant Funded category.

Grant Program Funds Authorized Staffing Count						
Grant Funded	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Proposed	Change Amount
Full-Time	5	5	5	15	21	6
Limited term	224	224	224	214	208	-6
Total	229	229	229	229	229	0

Staffing

- In FY 2025, the General Fund staffing complement for DSS is proposed to remain at FY 2024 level of 29 full-time positions and the Grant Funded staffing proposed to remain at FY 2024 level of 229, but with a reallocation of six (6) positions from LTGF category to full-time Grant Funded category, resulting in 21 full-time Grant Funded positions; and 208 LTGF positions for FY 2025. As of March, FY 2024, DSS had nine (9) General Fund civilian vacancies, which equates to a 31% General Funded full-time vacancy rate. These vacancies have been budgeted for in FY 2025.
- As of March, FY 2024, DSS had five (5) Grant Funded full-time vacancies. This represents a Grant Funded full-time vacancy rate of 24%.
- As of March, FY 2024, DSS had 80 LTGF vacancies. This represents a LTGF vacancy rate of 38.5%.
- In addition to the County portion, 443 full-time positions are authorized and funded directly by the state of Maryland. As of March, FY 2024, 70 of the State positions were listed as vacant, representing a vacancy rate of 16%.

FY 2024 Authorized Staffing by Funding Source (State and County Positions)



- DSS has integrated a larger network of candidate generating partnerships and strategies to continue to address the staffing crisis that has continued from FY 2023. Nonetheless, DSS continues to struggle with recruiting and retaining both State and County-funded positions, including both General Fund and Grant funded positions. Vacancy rates for LTGF positions continue to be high, which is a recognized problem across the country. Many LTGF employees leave seeking more competitive salaries and full benefits from other agencies throughout the Metro DC region.

INFORMATIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC SECTION

Mission

- The Department of Social Services (DSS) provides children, adult and family services to County citizens and residents who are in need and vulnerable in order to improve the lives of children, adults and families.

Core Services

- Children and adult services including protective services, foster care, adoptions and family preservation services.
- Family services including temporary cash assistance, food supplement, medical assistance, homeless prevention and intervention, energy assistance, emergency assistance and childcare assistance.
- Empowering families to be a part of the County's economic development.

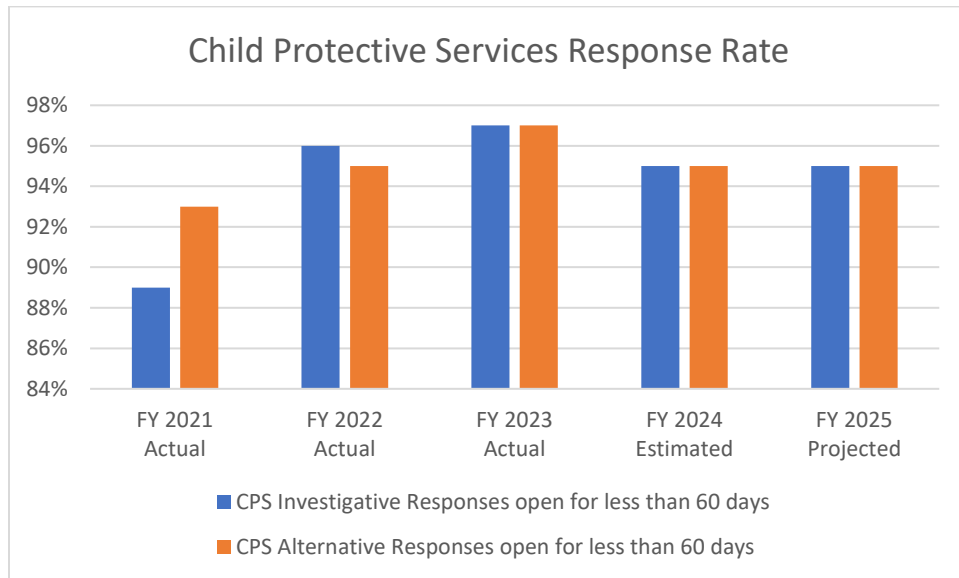
FY 2024 Key Accomplishments

- Provided a comprehensive array of services and support to youth aging out of foster care through a coordinated and collaborative effort via the Prince George's County YES (Youth Experiencing Success) Center.
- Expanded the mobile food market footprint, increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables for SNAP/EBT participants by funding a dollar-for-dollar match in Maryland Market Money currency of up to \$10 per household, per market day to help families stretch their food budgets.
- Exceeded annual enrollment targets for Prince George's County's Health Connect, a program responsible for health coverage enrollment services in the County, by 150%. Assisting more than 20,000 households during FY 2023.

Strategic Focus and Initiatives for FY 2025

- Increase the safety and stability of children and adults by completing protective service responses within the mandatory period.
- Stabilize families and individuals in need through increased access to services, resulting in an increase in the number of vulnerable, eligible citizens achieving stability through integrated services.
- Increase the focus on intervention for at-risk youth by assisting individuals, adults and families in achieving and maintaining permanence in the community.

Goal 1 — To provide intervention services to abused, neglected, or impoverished children, adults and families in order to ensure safety and reduce the risk in their living environment.



- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for Child Protective Service (CPS) responses decreased in FY 2020 and decreased further in FY 2021. FY 2022 rates of new allegations and investigations returned to more normal pre-pandemic rates as previously expected. Responses remained consistent in FY 2023. The Department expects that levels will remain at a more normal rate of investigations in FY 2025. Investigative responses are complex in nature and often require a different level of effort and collaboration with law enforcement, the community, and legal partners. CPS worked diligently to focus on the stabilization of children in the home by developing strength-based safety plans and timely follow-up in conjunction with strengthening the assessment skills of our front-line staff to identify and work closely with the supports and services needed. It is expected that going forward the Department will continue to be able to attain the 90% goal for CPS.

Goal 2 — Stabilize families and individuals in need through increased access to services.

Increase the number of vulnerable eligible households achieving stability through integrated eligibility services.					
	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
Temporary Cash Assistance cases	3,247	2,812	2,128	2,470	2,470
Food Supplement cases	60,596	79,019	54,723	66,871	66,871
Medical Assistance cases	26,473	28,807	28,253	28,530	28,530
Emergency Assistance to Families with Children cases	1	42	27	35	35
Energy Assistance	8,444	10,515	13,135	9,921	9,921
Times households/individuals (cases) access integrated services that provide support towards achieving stability	98,770	121,206	98,276	107,838	107,838

Goal 3 — To assist individuals, adults and families in need to achieve and maintain permanence in the community through increased access to services.

Increase the percentage of foster care youth achieving permanency for those whose plan is reunification, guardianship and adoption.					
	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimated	FY 2025 Projected
New entries into foster care	117	221	108	160	160
Exits from Foster Care	79	123	120	116	116
Youth achieving permanency (guardianship, adoption and reunification)	11%	15%	13%	12%	12%