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County Executive

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

November 4, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: Turkessa M. Green
County Auditor

THRU: Stanley A. Earley Director *SAE*
Office of Management and Budget

FROM: Gloria Brown Burnett, Director
Department of Social Services

RE: FY 2023 Operating/Program Review Questions – Department of Social Services

In an effort to facilitate an efficient and effective budget review and reporting process, we are submitting a separate request for operational and programmatic information. Please respond to the questions and complete any tables with the applicable data. In some cases, we have populated the tables with available known data. In instances where the tables need to be re-sized or modified to accommodate additional information, please feel free to do so. Please note, some of these questions were previously embedded in the overall first round budget question document. We are working to streamline that process and highlight the agency's operations outside of the routine budget process.

STAFFING

1. Vacancies:

- a. Are there any changes in the Department's ability to fill vacant positions (General Fund, Grant Funded full-time, Grant Funded limited term, State funded)?

The agency continues to experience challenges recruiting and filling vacant positions with qualified applicants due to the non-competitiveness of salaries compared to the rest of the metropolitan region, limitations on the ability to offer remote work options for many of our positions, and the large number of limited-term grant-funded positions that do not offer fringe benefit packages that make positions enticing. Despite these persistent challenges, the agency has made significant progress in the last 12 months to reduce vacancy rates (see chart below) and continues to place a high priority on this effort.

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Vacancy Type	Current	FY22	FY21	FY20
General Fund Merit	6	11	11	1
Grant Funded Merit	3	3	1	1
Limited Term Grant Funded	63	116	61	61

- b. What changes, if any, are planned for the remainder of FY 2023 to help fill the Department’s vacant positions?

The Department recently hired a new human resources manager with significant State personnel experience working in a large local department of social services and a new human resources assistant manager with significant County Office Human Resource Management experience. It is anticipated that these additions to the Department’s team will streamline and strengthen existing personnel processes, identify new opportunities to implement creative and cutting-edge recruitment and hiring strategies, establish strong onboarding and retention initiatives that reduce turnover and ensure continued access to high performing and experienced employees.

- c. To what extent concerns over compensation parity between the State funded employees and other employees restricts the Department’s efforts to address compensation matters related to the County’s General funded as well as Grant funded positions? i.e.; are General funded positions and Grant funded positions not offered attractive competitive salaries to remain more in-line with the existing State compensation levels?

County salaries are generally higher than State salaries however neither are competitive with the local market for similar skill sets and experience (typically 30% less). Recognizing that parity will take time to achieve, the Department has implemented interim measures to try and increase parity across its employee complement including but not limited to: offering supplemental stipends for clinical supervisors, providing a 75% reimbursement for social work licensure testing applications, testing preparation, and related fees, supporting hybrid work schedules whenever and wherever possible, helping employees to complete paperwork for school loan forgiveness, and advocating at the State leadership level for increased state salaries. Newly evolving parity efforts also include exploration of hiring bonuses and conversion of limited term grant funded (LTGF) positions to merit for long standing grant funded programs.

WORKLOAD DEMANDS & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

2. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act spending recommendations (adopted CR-067-2021) for the Department of Social Services in FY 2022 totaled \$3.0 million for the homeless shelter/warm nights program. The ARP funds were dedicated to the acquisition/development of a permanent facility for the warm nights program, which was set to return to the pre-COVID-19 capacity as the COVID-19 Non-Congregate Shelter is phased out.

- a. What is the total cost and funding sources for this project?

The Department has a total of \$8.0 million in ARPA funds to support the Warm Nights Program. The funds were originally allocated for operations (\$3.0 million) and acquisition / development (\$5.0 million). Based on a market cost analysis by the Office of Central Services, the Department requested and received approval to reallocate the \$3.0 million from shelter operations to acquisition / development of a permanent facility increasing the total funds for the replacement shelter to \$8.0 million.

- b. Has the COVID-19 Non-Congregate Shelter program been phased out? When did it end?

The Department closed its COVID-19 isolation / quarantine shelter response on June 30, 2022 and began efforts to reduce the non-congregate sheltering (NCS) of persons experiencing homelessness on July 1, 2022. To date, the Department has been able to reduce the total NCS operations from 149 rooms to approximately 63 rooms and continues to work towards complete closure as quickly as possible. It is important to note that these efforts may be significantly challenged by the onset of winter and hypothermic weather and anticipated increases in “new arrivals” bused into the region from other states.

- c. What is the status of acquisition/development of a permanent facility for the warm nights program? What is the timeline for this project?

The Office of Central Services released a request for proposal for space on August 18, 2022 and is accepting submissions on a rolling basis. Representatives of both agencies are conducting joint site visits to assess the viability of the current potential sites and are working to have recommendations made by mid-November.

- d. What is the desired capacity of the planned permanent facility for the warm nights program?

The proposed capacity is 65 - 75 beds which restores the Warm Nights program to the pre-COVID level. Additional beds would contribute to the overall need for shelter beds in the County and are a consideration of site selection.

- e. Whom will the planned facility serve? Please describe qualification criteria and the scope of services provided by the new facility.

The planned facility will serve residents of the County who are literally unsheltered and living in places not meant for human habitation. This is the same population previously served by the County’s church based pre-COVID Warm Nights program and the NCS COVID emergency shelter that began in March of 2020.

3. Please explain how the need for shelter beds is being met while the COVID-19 Non-Congregate Shelter program ended and the permanent facility for the warm nights program is not up and running yet. Who is most affected? How many individuals/families on daily (or monthly) basis? How their needs are being met?

The NCS program is still being phased out however, the Department was able to use a one-time allocation of emergency housing vouchers to help support the transition of 139 homeless households into permanent subsidized housing in partnership with the Housing Authority. The remaining households present with significant barriers to housing including no or extremely low income, lack of documentation, extremely poor credit histories including multiple prior evictions, and/or severe behavioral and somatic health needs; all of which greatly impact their housing options in this market. The Department continues to evaluate the potential impact of full closure however based on pre-COVID shelter turn away rates (40%), we anticipate that the lack of appropriate care beds, increased processing of court ordered evictions, drastically rising market rent rates and the onset of the hypothermic season will all drive the demand for shelter up over the next 12 months.

4. Please provide a status update and an anticipated completion date for the development of a new Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (an update to the *Ten-year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in Prince George's County 2012-2021*).

The Department has several elements of the strategic planning process currently underway including but not limited to: 1. A regional racial equity analysis in partnership with the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments, C4 Innovations and nine area jurisdictions; 2. Establishment of a workgroup composed of residents with lived experience and expertise to assess policies, procedures and programs (or lack thereof) and make recommendations; 3. A community planning process to develop goals and objectives specifically targeting the reduction of unsheltered homelessness among residents with severe service needs; 4. An analysis of existing health and behavioral health systems and identification of opportunities to improve access by the homeless and 5. Provider and consumer focus groups targeting underserved sub-populations including the Latino/a community to understand barriers to access. The Department is also in the process of securing a federal technical assistance partner who will be leading the larger community engagement and strategic planning process and anticipates publication of the new Strategic Plan no later than June 30, 2023.

5. During the FY 2023 Budget Review it was reported that the Department explored the option of working with Unqork on a no code enterprise-grade software application to support online collection of applications, document uploads, case processing, and reporting, and found it to be cost prohibitive. The Department reported that it was exploring other software options to support homelessness and shelter management operations. Please provide an update on the Department's efforts to identify a suitable homelessness services and shelter management software.

The Department has had an existing homeless management information system that meets all federal reporting requirements for several years. The desired software request noted during the budget review was for an application management system to automate the Department's homeless prevention and rapid rehousing programs. The agency is still exploring alternatives.

6. It has been previously reported that foster youth with behavioral health concerns have experienced "hospital overstays" due to the challenges in finding appropriate placement options. Please elaborate on whether this issue continues to exist, or if it has been addressed.

This continues to be a significant nationwide challenge and the solutions are complex and long term. The Department has a number of efforts in place to reduce "overstays" however the fact remains that there are no residential treatment facilities and/or crisis beds for youth in the County and many youth have been rejected from every group home available in the State due to the complexities of their service needs. Out of state placements are limited, costly and our youth remain on waiting lists for extended periods of time due to lack of vacancies.

7. For the Crisis Intervention Public Schools program, please advise how many schools (separate between elementary, middle, high schools and others in the response) have Department's employees present at a school site? What is the total number of the Department's employees assigned to the Prince George's County Public School System to staff the Crisis Intervention Public Schools program?

The Department provides crisis intervention and case management services in 20 middle schools. Each school is assigned one Department of Social Services School and community advocate. There are currently 15 advocates in schools with five vacant positions in recruitment and three supervisors. In addition, the Department has launched early childhood home visiting services targeting one school community and has one parent educator on staff to administer the parents as teacher's model.

8. *Community Programs Division: Homeless services*

- a. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department's street outreach efforts.

The Department does not currently report workload indicators and performance metrics for its' street outreach efforts.

- b. What types of activities does street outreach involve?

Street outreach is a newly evolving homeless response however, it is designed to meet the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness in unsheltered locations by connecting them with emergency shelter and/or critical somatic/behavioral health services (when agreed to by the individual and when necessary resources are available). Activities generally consist of street-based outreach and engagement, survival aid, trust building, trauma informed case management, crisis intervention / emergency connections to health and mental health services and transportation, information and referral and follow up services.

- c. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s emergency shelter program.

INDICATOR	FY 2022
# of households <i>entering</i> regular shelter	298
# of households <i>exiting</i> regular shelter	323
#of households <i>entering</i> COVID-19 shelter	339
#of households <i>exiting</i> COVID-19 shelter	387

- d. Please provide a definition of ‘emergency shelter’. What is a typical length of stay?

An emergency shelter is any facility with overnight sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide *temporary* shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless. The length of stay is dependent on the circumstances of the households however the current average is 78 days.

- e. Please provide an overview of the number of emergency shelter facilities and beds in the County.

There are currently five facilities (this does not include the COVID NCS temporary shelter) operating 191 emergency shelter beds for individuals, youth and families experiencing an episode of homelessness in the County and 43 emergency beds for persons fleeing domestic violence and at imminent risk of harm.

- f. How does the number of emergency shelter beds compare to the needs of the County’s population for emergency shelter beds?

Last year, the Homeless Hotline received 15,837 calls for shelter. The daily emergency shelter bed capacity is 191 beds and the total number of homeless residents served in the last reporting year in those beds was 1,342.

- g. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department's rapid re-housing program.

There were 257 people served through the Continuum of Care's (CoC) Housing Urban Development (HUD) funded programs and the Department provided an additional 890 people with \$850,747.22 in one-time rapid rehousing financial assistance funds in FY 2022.

- h. Please provide a definition of 'rapid re-housing'.

Rapid rehousing is a form of permanent housing that is short-term (up to three months) and/or medium-term (for three to twelve months) tenant-based rental assistance as necessary to help a homeless individual or family move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.

- i. Please provide an overview of the number of rapid re-housing resources (units/beds) in the County.

There are currently two HUD programs providing rapid re-housing and unit/beds vary each year based on length of stay and household size. The funding is fixed so the assistance available is directly proportional to the utilization of any single household. These programs served 257 people last year.

- j. How does the number of rapid re-housing units/beds compare to the needs of the County's population for rapid re-housing?

Rapid re-housing is one of many tools the Department uses to stabilize families experiencing homelessness who are in the shelter system. Last year the CoC sheltered 1,342 residents and only 257 (19.1%) were served through the rapid rehousing programs.

- k. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department's permanent supportive housing efforts.

The Department provided permanent supportive housing for 232 households (382 individuals) in FY 2022.

- l. Please provide a definition of 'supportive housing'.

Permanent supportive housing is community-based housing for persons experiencing homelessness with severe service needs and has no designated length of stay.

- m. Please provide an overview of the number of supportive housing facilities, units and beds in the County.

There are currently 14 permanent supportive housing programs operating a total of 319 permanent supportive housing beds for individuals, youth and families with severe service needs in the County.

- n. How does the number of supportive housing units compare to the needs of the County’s population for supportive housing services?

The County currently has more than 200 households that meet the eligibility criteria for permanent supportive housing (PSH) and cannot be served with the existing housing inventory. This does not take into account the 60% turn away rate which, if using a “served” population service rate proxy, could account for an additional 300+ homeless households that are eligible for and need PSH at any given time.

- o. To what extent the Department’s homeless services incorporate the housing first principles?

100% of all HUD funded projects are housing first.

9. *Community Programs Division: Crisis assistance services*

- a. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s crisis assistance utilities program. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), the level/amount of the provided assistance.

INDICATOR	FY 2022	FY 2021	FY 2020
# of energy assistance applications	10,109	16,665	12,972

- b. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s crisis assistance rent and mortgage arrearages program. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), the level/amount of the provided assistance.

The Department provided 542 individuals with \$754,803 in rent and mortgage arrearage financial assistance in FY 2022.

- c. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s crisis assistance food services. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), the level/amount of the provided assistance.

INDICATOR	FY 2022
Pounds of food distributed	77,463
# of households receiving food	1,935

- d. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s ‘other disasters’ crisis assistance services. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), the level/amount of the provided assistance.

The Department does not track “other disaster” assistance separately. These numbers are included in the crisis assistance numbers provided in 9.b above.

10. Community Programs Division: Maryland Market Money

- a. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s Maryland Market Money program.

Market Name	Total # of SNAP transactions eligible for incentive match (Jul. 1, 2021- Jun. 30, 2022)	Total # of eWIC-FVB transactions eligible for incentive match (Jul. 1, 2021- Jun. 30, 2022)	Total # of FMNP-WIC transactions eligible for incentive match (Jul. 1, 2021- Jun. 30, 2022)	Total # of SFMNP transactions eligible for incentive match (Jul. 1, 2021- Jun. 30, 2022)	Total # of MMM incentive match transactions (Jul. 1, 2021- Jun. 30, 2022)
Prince George's County					
Cheverly Community Market	137	43	16	5	201
Greater Baden WIC Pop-up Markets	N/A	N/A	518	N/A	518
Greenbelt Farmers Market	249	N/A	198	56	503
Hollywood Farmers Market*	0	N/A	0	0	0
Queen Anne Farm Stand*	0	N/A	0	0	0
Riverdale Park Farmers Market	428	26	3001	21	3476
The Capital Market of 20743	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	30
The Capital Market at Creative Suitland	44	N/A	N/A	N/A	44
TOTALS	888	69	3733	82	4772

* Market still in benefits acceptance setup process or started matching after FY22 end. N/A = Market did not accept this benefit type.

Market Name	Value of SNAP Transactions (Jul. 1, 2021- Jun. 30, 2022)	Value of eWIC transactions (Jul. 1, 2021 - Jun. 30, 2022)	Value of WIC-FMNP Transactions (Jul. 1, 2021 - Jun. 30, 2022)	Value of SFMNP Transactions (Jul. 1, 2021 - Jun. 30, 2022)	MMM Distributed (Jul. 1, 2021 - Jun. 30, 2022)	MMM Redeemed (Jul. 1, 2021 - Jun. 30, 2022)
Prince George's County						
Cheverly Community Market	\$2,171	\$0**	\$295	\$60	\$2,442	\$2,315
Greater Baden WIC Pop-ups	N/A	N/A	\$5,195	N/A	\$5,195	\$5,195
Greenbelt Farmers Market	\$5,336	N/A	\$2,095	\$555	\$5,907	\$6,500
Hollywood Farmers Market*	\$0	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Queen Anne Farm Stand*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Riverdale Park Farmers Market	\$5,657	\$676	\$42,714	\$185	\$47,618	\$37,404
The Capital Market of 20743	\$236	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$236	\$216
The Capital Market at Creative Suitland	\$533	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$271	\$218
TOTALS	\$13,933	\$676	\$50,299	\$800	\$61,669	\$51,848
<small>N/A = Market did not accept and/or match this benefit type. TBD=Market has still not reported data. *Market still in benefits acceptance setup process or started matching after FY end. **Market offered match to customer with proof of benefit since no vendors were able to accept that benefit rather than turn customer away. Markets are only reporting benefits that were matched. There may have been benefits redemption outside of the matching program especially if benefits were spent directly with farmers and went unreported to market management; therefore, some benefits numbers may be significantly lower than what was actually redeemed throughout the season. Market managers also reported that farmers with eWIC equipment often did not bring their equipment to the market. MMM amounts will also include market contributions therefore if amount shows higher than awarded funds, we have not overspent funding from this grant. The program also feeds into independent incentive programs run by markets who may offer a significantly higher match amount per transaction. These numbers reflect total match incentive at those markets. Unused incentive funding distributed to markets will rollover into FY23 since the market season spans two fiscal years.</small>						

- b. How do FY 2022 performance metrics compare to FY 2021?

In 2018, before the County offered financial support for program expansion, only the Riverdale Park Farmers Market participated in the MMM program where shoppers spent \$9,990 in MMM and nutrition benefits that year. In FY 2022, with an 900% increase in access points seeking to participate since County financial support began, six access points (Riverdale Park, Cheverly, Greenbelt, The Capital Market of 20743, The Capital Market at Creative Suitland, and the Greater Baden WIC Pop-up Markets) actively matching in FY 2022, spending \$51,448 in MMM and nutrition. This increase directly benefited local market vendors and Prince George’s County shoppers and helped those markets and farms build capacity while addressing food insecurity in the County.

11. Community Programs Division: Special initiatives

- a. Please provide an update on the Department’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program. What has been achieved in FY 2023 to date and what is planned for the remainder of FY 2023?

All six housing projects were launched in FY 2022 (on or before December 1, 2021) and are operational. No new YHDP initiatives are planned for FY 2023.

- b. Please provide an update on the Department’s Pay for Success Demonstration Program. What has been achieved in FY 2023 to date and what is planned for the remainder of FY 2023?

Implementation of this project was suspended during COVID. Due to the time delay, a feasibility re-analysis was conducted in April of 2022 and the resulting data no longer supports implementation of this project. The target population was intended to be high system utilizers of both the public safety and homeless systems however COVID significantly reduced the number of reported/repeat arrests and incarceration and there is now very little shared population between the two systems. Most of those with prior

history are remaining on the street and in the homeless system rather than cycling in and out of the public safety systems. Unfortunately, the project will be permanently closed as the Department of Justice/HUD will not fund projects that impact only one system however, the housing needs documented in the original feasibility study still exist.

- c. Please provide an update on the Department’s Low Income Household Water Assistance Program. What has been achieved in FY 2023 to date and what is planned for the remainder of FY 2023? What challenges, if any, does the Department face in administering this program?

The Department has fully expended its LIHWAP funds and suspended application intake in July of 2022. The State is scheduled to reallocate funds from under-performing jurisdictions in November of 2022 and the Department has submitted a request for additional funds. The Department has no challenges administering this program.

12. Child, Adult and Family Services Division: Adult protective services

- a. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s adult protective services.

Adult Services	FY 2022
Percent of adults without a recurring claim of abuse within six months of first claim (valid or invalid)	99.4%
Percentage of adult abuse, neglect or exploitation cases opened less than 60 days	99.0%

- b. What is the difference between referrals, investigations and indicated findings?

Referrals - calls that are made to our intake hotline regarding adults who are residing in the community and are presumed to be vulnerable. Services begin upon acceptance of a referral concerning a vulnerable adult who is alleged to be at risk.

Investigation - a formal inquiry consisting of information gathering, interviewing, crisis intervention, risk reduction for allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults.

Indicated Finding - a finding where there has been a report that an alleged vulnerable adult has been subjected to mistreatment but information available does not meet the criteria for a “confirmed” finding and there is not sufficient information for a finding of “ruled out”.

Referral/Investigation/Finding Types: Neglect by Others, Self-Neglect, Financial Exploitation, Exploitation, Physical abuse, and Sexual abuse.

c. How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

Adult Services	FY 2022	FY2021	FY2020
Total Adult Protective Services allegations	859	1,023	879
Percentage of adult abuse, neglect or exploitation cases opened less than 60 days	99.0%	96.3%	99.9%

	FY 21	FY 22
In Home Aid Services	56	44
SSTA/Senior Care	216	192
Adult Services	38	46

d. Please provide data on the timeliness of the adult protective complaint's investigations for FY 2022.

APS	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	YTD Total
60 Day Compliance	100%	97.7%	100%	100%	97%	100%	100%	100%	93.5%	100%	100%	100%	99.0%

13. Child, Adult and Family Services Division: Child protective services

a. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department's child protective services.

Child Welfare (Child Protective Services)	FY 2022
Number of child abuse and neglect allegations screened in for CPS response	3,450
Percentage of CPS Investigation Responses open less than 60 days	93%
Percentage of CPS Alternative Response open less than 60 days	99%

b. What is the difference between referrals, investigations and indicated findings?

Referral - an allegation of child abuse or neglect made or received by any state, county, or municipal corporation, with sufficient information to screen the report for an appropriate CPS or other response.

Investigation - a formal inquiry consisting of information gathering, interviewing, crisis intervention, risk reduction for allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of a minor.

Indicated Finding - a disposition at the end of an investigation that there is credible evidence, which has not been satisfactorily refuted, that child abuse or neglect occurred.

c. How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

Child Protective Services	FY 2022	FY2021*	FY2020
Number of child abuse and neglect allegations screened in for CPS response	3,450	2,143	3,788
Percentage of CPS Investigation Responses open less than 60 days	94%	89%	92%
Percentage of CPS Alternative Response open less than 60 days	99%	93%	100%

** Note: The Department experienced a temporary reduction in reports in FY 2021 which we attribute in large part to the impact of COVID-19 related school and activity closures and the inability of traditional mandatory reporters to have face-to-face access to children.*

d. Please provide data on the timeliness of the child protective complaints investigations for FY 2022.

CPS Compliance	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	YTD Total
60 Day Compliance	88%	89%	91%	87%	83%	82%	91%	86%	93%	89%	89%	94%	89%

14. Child, Adult and Family Services Division: Family preservation services

a. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department's family preservation services.

In-Home Family Preservation	FY 2022
Average number of families receiving family preservation services monthly	81
Number of families receiving information and referral through the kinship care continuum	38

b. How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

In-Home Family Preservation	FY 2022*	FY2021	FY2020
Average number of families receiving family preservation services monthly	81	110	115
Number of families receiving information and referral through the kinship care continuum	38	56	119

**This is a completely voluntary program which can account for increases and decreases in participation from year to year, however the Department is currently reviewing FY 2022 data to determine if there are any other factors that impacted this participation number.*

15. *Child, Adult and Family Services Division: Foster care*

- a. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s foster care services.

Foster Care and Adoptions	FY 2022
Percentage of Monthly Children in care visited	95.9%
Number of adoptions finalized	14

- b. Is there data on how many children have been in foster care in a given year (FY 2022 for example)?

The Department cares for an average of 450 - 500 children each year. In FY 2022, the Department had 485 children committed to its’ care.

- c. Is there data on how many children exit foster care due to aging out? If yes, please provide such data for FY 2022.

In FY 2022, 37 youth (7% of all youth in care) aged out/emancipated out of care. This number is higher than past yearly averages because during the pandemic, waivers were granted and youth were encouraged to remain in care.

- d. How does FY 2022 performance and workload demands data compare to the previous years?

Ready by 21	FY 2022	FY 2021	FY 2020
Percentage of Monthly Children in care visited	95.9%	97%	97%
Number of adoptions finalized	14	5	8

- e. How does the number of foster care households compare to the needs of the County’s youth who are in foster care? Please provide data on the number of foster homes in the County.

The Department consistently has more than 400 youth in care at any given time. There are 120 licensed resource homes and in FY 2022, 36 new homes were licensed. Not all youth in care are appropriate for traditional foster care.

- f. Based on the FY 2021 data presented during the FY 2023 Budget Review, it appears that out of 507 children in foster care, 55 (11%) have exited foster care either through reunification, adoption or guardianship. Given how few children exit the foster care, how does the Department cope with the continuous and probably increasing need for foster homes?

During the pandemic, the courts were limited in their ability to send children home and close cases, therefore the number of exits from care decreased during that time period.

The courts have now resumed full service and we anticipate these numbers to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Additionally, the recruitment team continues their recruitment efforts in the community and via radio spots and advertisements in local community newspapers. The majority of youth who need placement are youth 13 years and older and some have a criminal history. Due to these various concerns, the Department created efforts to retain the homes that we have and put additional services in place. Many of these older youth present with needs that Department resource parents are not able to address, and they are then placed with treatment foster care agencies. In 2021, more than 50 % of children entering care were placed in higher level placements. Treatment agencies have informed the Department that they are having a difficult time recruiting resource parents and that the needs of our youth are more severe than their parents can handle. In the last year the Department has partnered with three additional mentor support agencies in hopes of further stabilizing youth in their placements while referring youth for mental health services.

16. Child, Adult and Family Services Division: Policy, Practice and Ready by 21

- a. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s Policy, Practice and Ready by 21.

Ready by 21	FY 2022
Percentage of Monthly Children in care visited	95.9%
# New Resource homes licensed	36

- b. How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

Ready by 21	FY 2022	FY 2021	FY 2020
Percentage of Monthly Children in care visited	95.9%	97%	97%
Number of adoptions finalized	14	5	8
# New Resource homes licensed	36	20	24

17. Family Investment Administration Division:

- a. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), the level/amount/type of the provided assistance, and any other indicator(s). How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits	FY 2022*	FY 2021	FY 2020
# Program applications received	41,864	60,686	92,665
Average monthly program caseload	79,019	75,340	47,626
# approved	27,337	42,782	63,744

**Note: Caseloads are returning to pre-pandemic levels.*

- b. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s Temporary Cash Assistance, Maryland’s Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Programs. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), the level/amount of the provided assistance. How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

Temporary Cash Assistance/Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	FY 2022*	FY 2021	FY 2020
# Program applications received	4,333	8,497	12,229
Average monthly program caseload	2,780	3,247	1,744
# Approved	1,857	1,388	3,497

**Note: Caseloads are returning to pre-pandemic levels.*

- c. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s Temporary Disability Assistance Program. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), the level/amount/type of the provided assistance, and any other indicator(s). How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

Temporary Disability Assistance Program	FY 2022*	FY 2021	FY 2020
Program applications received	3,009	6446	4727
Average monthly program caseload	872	1140	857
# Approved	650	954	1,479

**Note: Caseloads are returning to pre-pandemic levels.*

- d. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s Medicaid, or Medical Assistance, Program. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), the level/amount/type of the provided assistance, and any other indicator(s). How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

Total approved in Qualified Health Plan	FY 2022
Modified Adjusted Gross Income	217,317
Qualified Health Plan	23,617
Non-modified Adjusted Gross Income	12,843
Supplemental Security Income Recipients	14,875
Total	268,652

- e. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s Public Assistance to Adults Program. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), the level/amount/type of the provided assistance, and any other indicator(s). How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

Public Assistance to Adults Program	FY 2022	FY 2021	FY 2020
# Program applications received	55	60	80
Average monthly program caseload	328	368	409
# Approved	93	81	82

- f. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department’s Emergency Assistance to Families with Children Program. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), the level/amount/type of the provided assistance, and any other indicator(s). How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

Emergency Assistance to Families with Children	FY 2023 (to date)	FY 2022*
Total Applications Approved	114	61
Total Financial Assistance Issued	\$394,494.00	\$168,183.00

**Note: ERAP and other COVID assistance during FY 2022 temporarily reduced public requests for assistance from this program. FY 2023 trends indicate that caseloads are returning to pre-pandemic levels.*

- g. Please provide workload indicators and performance metrics for FY 2022 for the Department's Burial Assistance Program. Please include the number of applicants, the number of qualifying applicants (who actually received assistance), and any other indicator(s). How does FY 2022 performance and workload data compare to the previous years?

The Department does not currently report workload indicators and performance metric for its' burial assistance Program.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

18. What are the Department's key information technology and equipment priorities/needs? Please explain.

The Department has recently hired a new information technology manager with significant systems experience and has already led several improvement efforts including but not limited to: use of advanced network diagnostic tools and repair kits to troubleshoot Power Over Ethernet (PoE) issues for the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phones and network outages as part of daily operation support for the agency's employees; automated help desk ticketing software for better end user support; and transition of the office customer queuing system to provide additional functionality that will enable our customers to check in from anywhere, monitor their position in the queue, make appointments, change appointments, etc. These functionalities will improve customer experience and enable us to be more responsive and it is anticipated that the newly led IT team will continue to streamline and strengthen existing internal processes and identify new opportunities to implement creative strategies to meet technology needs.

19. What challenges, if any, does the Department face when working with MD THINK? Are the issues being addressed by the State? What are the operational impacts of MD THINK related issues on the Department and the clients its serves?

The system has great potential and should be very useful when fully developed however, there are significant Statewide challenges that are currently driving a large increase in customer complaints that are very concerning to the Department. The majority of these technology challenges lie with the implementation of the Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) component of MDTHINK which is the eligibility system for processing Family Investment mainstream programs. Currently, the system is not very stable which causes delays and incorrect automated case decisions requiring workarounds and manual fixes; incorrect closure of cases - system errors; late and incorrect mailings to customers; inability of the system to allow customers to remotely upload documents and view case status in the system; and poor response times by the call center causing significant on hold times. Several staff members of the Department are actively participating on a Statewide team charged with identifying challenges and making recommendations for system fixes.