



Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

February 7, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: David H. Van Dyke
County Auditor

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

FROM: Gloria Brown Burnett, Director
Department of Social Services

RE: FY 2019 Mid-Year Budget Review Questions – Social Services

Operating Budget

1. Please identify, quantify, and explain expected or possible instances where categories of expenditures are expected to exceed authorized FY 2019 expenditure levels. What conditions, factors, and trends are driving these higher than expected levels of expenditures?

During the last several years the Department has experienced a significant increase in cell phone and other wireless technology data charges. We anticipate an increase of approximately 100% from the amount budgeted in FY 2019. We did experience a similar level of expenditures that exceeds budgeted amounts that were ultimately covered by areas where we experience less than anticipated expenditures in other line items. The factors that have created these trends were additional and increased use by staff requiring mobile technology, i.e. cell phones, laptop computers and/or iPads.

2. Please identify, quantify, and explain expected or possible instances where categories of expenditures are expected to be significantly lower than authorized FY 2019 expenditure levels. What conditions, factors, and trends are driving these lower than expected levels of expenditures?

At this time, we do not anticipate any categories of expenditures to be significantly lower than authorized in FY 2019.

3. Does the Department expect that a supplemental budget request may be necessary for FY 2019? If so, how much does the Department expect to request?

At this time, the Department does not anticipate the need for a supplemental appropriation request in FY 2019.

Wayne K. Curry Administration Building, 1301 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD 20774
(301) 952-3300

www.princegeorgescountymd.gov



4. Is the Department on track to reach the level of grant funding anticipated in the FY 2019 approved budget? If not, why? What is the impact on operations and core services as a result of any unrealized grant funding?

The Department does expect a lower than expected funding in some grants. This is the result of the ending of some grants and lower funding allocations for others. This will not have any acute impact on services as these were anticipated prior to the start of FY 2019 and services were able to be maintained through transfer of funding to other sources or reductions in areas that had little impact on the customer such as administrative cost reductions.

Staffing

5. Of the Department's 25 full-time authorized General Fund positions for FY 2019, how many are currently vacant?

There are currently six vacant full-time General Fund positions.

6. Of the Department's 5 full-time authorized Grant Funded positions for FY 2019, how many are currently vacant?

All grant funded full-time positions are filled.

7. Of the Department's 213 authorized limited term grant funded positions (LTGF), how many are currently vacant?

The Department currently has 61 vacant positions within our LTGF compliment.

8. Is the Department actively recruiting for these vacant positions? Please discuss the challenges the Department is facing in recruiting and filling these positions?

The Department is actively recruiting for all positions as identified in the above questions. For full-time positions, the challenge is the recruitment time to fill vacated positions. All funded vacant merit positions are being actively recruited to fill. Two are in the interview process, two are in the approval path with the Office of Human Resource Management and two are unfunded. For LTGF positions, the Department experiences consistent turn over due to competing salaries in the area and the lack of benefits for these positions. The numbers of vacant LTGF may be consistent but these are different roles within different department programs as turnover occurs in this position type. Twenty-nine vacant LTGF positions are currently in the recruitment process.

9. Please discuss the impact the vacant positions have had or is having on the Department's operations.

Vacant positions, especially the full-time put additional workload on existing staff who are already fully tasked with duties. This can lead to delays in meeting project due dates and/or administrative functions, as the Department's staff prioritizes service delivery to customers when faced with competing priorities.

Workload and program impact

10. Please identify any other factors, trends, and conditions that have affected workloads and describe the impact they have had on the Department. What additional measures are being planned or considered in FY 2019 to ensure the continuity of services consistent with the Department's mission and core functions?
- a. The average caseload for the eligibility programs has slightly dropped; however, applications submitted for benefits remain elevated. There are more tools available for residents to seek benefits which may contribute to the high number of applications however anecdotal information suggests that families need assistance, but either do not qualify or do not complete the application process. One of the tools to access information is the State Customer Service Center, which resulted in residents having increased access to discuss their case with a representative. The number of customer service inquiries requiring follow-up for the department more than doubled in FY 2018 but the customer was able to access a live person when initially contacting the department. This has resulted in improved mechanisms to resolve customer problems and approximately 85% of the time the department is able to resolve the customer concern within the allowable time frame.
 - b. The Department supports elderly and disabled adults to ensure they are safe and able to remain in their homes and communities. As the County's elderly (at least 65 years old) and vulnerable adult population increases, it is anticipated that the demand for these services will continue to increase accordingly. From FY 2015 to FY2018, the number of Adult Protective Service (APS) Investigations has increased by 30% and staffing levels have remained constant, which had previously resulted in challenges meeting investigations compliance goals. This along with legal and fiscal challenges related to investigating complex financial and health care issues for cases involving vulnerable adults can make it difficult to ensure resident safety. The October 2017 change in legislation now allows the Department 60 days to complete investigations and investigators have well exceeded the timeliness compliance at a rate of 99.7% while also maintaining the quality and thoroughness of the investigations. The Department is closely monitoring shifts this population's need and available resources to decrease risk and ensure safety.
 - c. The Department has experienced an increase in Child Protective Services allegations since FY 2015 and a 28% increase in CPS investigations. This has greatly increased the caseloads for child protective service social workers, especially those conducting investigations for sexual abuse cases. Between FY 2016 and FY2017 there was a 16% increase in calls to the child abuse screening line from the community and school system which was managed by adding call-taker overflow capacity and designating the addition of a school-based CPS staff. In FY2018 this volume has leveled off. The recent uptick in CPS responses is thought to be a result of increases in education and awareness efforts.

- d. From FY 2012 to FY 2017, the department has significantly reduced the number of children in out of home placement through improved practice and effective moving of children towards permanent family placements. Following a statewide and national trend, the department has experienced a 5% increase in the average monthly foster care population in fiscal year 2018. Collectively, the child, adult and family serving programs have experienced slow but steady increases, while at the same time, had decreases in staffing. Over the past years, the programs have lost a significant number of positions; the majority of them are case-carrying positions, which negatively impact the caseload ratio and impacts quality of care.
- e. The State is working toward modernizing the case management and eligibility systems that are used within the department. These systems are expected to create work efficiencies and also provide case connections between programs which will support a more comprehensive approach in serving families. As these systems are implemented, the department will be working to ensure staff are able to take full advantage of the systems while also shifting their roles to provide higher quality of service and crisis management to families, adults and children in need.

11. Please provide an update on the Child Care Safety Awareness Campaign, to include the number of individuals assisted during FY 2019.

The Department has several efforts designed to engage the community around the role of adults in the protection and safety of children. The Department of Social Services led the effort along with multiple governmental and community-based organizations to create a County-wide Child Care Safety Awareness Campaign. The campaign focused on reaching county residents through Facebook, Instagram, SNAPchat, and Twitter, as well as bus wraps and bus stops. Via social media, more than 8,000 residents were reached using the hashtag: #PGCSafeKids. Additionally, the campaign has continued to highlight awareness by distributing information during outreach events, through social media posts, movie theater ads, and bus shelter ads. Additionally, the CPS Training Unit starting in October 2017 began training the general public on issues related to identifying and reporting of child abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse. It utilizes an evidence-based sex abuse prevention curriculum, with the objective of trying to increase awareness about sex abuse identification, prevention and reporting in the county. Since its inception, 129 training sessions have been conducted and 2,062 attendees have been trained to identify and report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

12. Please provide an update on the Child Protective Services/Prince George's County School Investigative Unit, to include the number of individuals assisted during FY 2019.

The School-based CPS Investigative Unit was implemented to increase DSS's ability to conclude investigations within 30 days thus decreasing the length of time school staff alleged of abuse or neglect remained on administrative leave pending an investigation outcome. Since implementation, the number of days to complete an investigation has reduced by 32 days, from

an average of 60 days to 28 days. A 32-day reduction allows for the school system to return a staff to the classroom quickly when the case shows no merit to the allegation, increasing stability in the classroom and reducing the use of substitute teaching. For those staff who are indicated, the school system is able to move to a employment disposition more quickly, allowing for more permanent replacements to be found. Thus far, in FY 2019, 108 child abuse or neglect referrals have been received from the school system and 47% (51) were accepted for investigation. This investigation involves collection of interviews and evidence regarding the alleged incident. Of these cases investigated, on average, 11% are found to be indicated (or having occurred) for child abuse or neglect. In addition, this unit's work with school staff allows for an increase in communication between Prince George's County Public Schools and DSS of referral outcomes for school staff within a week to support the school system's quick disposition by the central office based on their employment practices. This collaboration has reduced the total number of reports but increased the percentage of those reports which are investigated. This was a result of regular work groups focused on consultation and education on behavior that would meet the legislative definition of abuse and neglect. This education has supported the schools' systems policy and practice decision in quickly managing staff who are involved in abuse allegations.

13. Please provide an update on the Department's efforts, in collaboration between Prince George's County Government and Prince George's County Public Schools, to provide services to students and families through the Community Resource Advocate Program (CRA).

The partnership between the Office of the County Executive, PGCPSS and DSS to implement the Community Resource Advocate program (CRA) serving as the centerpiece program of the larger Prince George's Community Schools Network (formerly referred to as Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative @Schools) with placement of a DSS staff person, referred to as a CRA, in 40 schools located in high need, feeder schools within the County. In the school year 2018, the CRA Program provided services to 1,727 students and has provided services to 885 families to date (July to December 2018) in SY 2019. Using strategic plans for each school, in addition to departmental services, The Community School Network has leveraged extensive community partnerships to serve just over 10,000 individuals. One primary relationship is the offering of behavioral health services within each of the 40 schools. These providers offer individual, group and family counseling services to support the emotional wellbeing and behavioral management of youth and their families, to allow for students to come the school prepared to learn. In addition, these providers have access to special funding to support uninsured or underinsured populations have access to behavioral health services, which are provided through collaboration with the CRA at each school site. Additional partnerships are developed for a subset of school sites, based on the assessed needs of the student population. Examples are: La Clínica del Pueblo to address the needs of minors fleeing violence in Central America; Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection to provide graduation, promotion, college, and career readiness services; and Maryland Multicultural Youth Center to provide students at 10 high schools and 4 middle schools with intensive case management to help them reach their educational, employment, and

healthy living goals. The CRA program partners with the Capital Area Food Bank to serve families at six monthly school-based food markets to address community food insecurity. To date in SY 2018-19, an average of 230 families were served each month. Further, the CRA Program provided over 120 families per week with food bags to address food disparity for students that rely on school-based meals.

14. Please discuss how the \$105,000 in additional funding provided by the County Council in the FY 2019 approved budget was expended (or the Department's plans to expend approved funds) for the Maryland Money Market Double Value Coupon startup costs.

These funds are in the process of being contracted with the Maryland Farmers Market Association, who currently operates the program statewide. This program will provide dollar for dollar matching funds for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and other federal benefits to extend purchase power to recipients, support equitable access to farmers markets for all Prince Georgians, and support economic growth through expanded customer base for local farmers. The contact budget for this program has \$80,000 identified dollar match and will go directly to the purchase power of the customer. The program as the remaining \$25,000 for administration and infrastructure costs of the program. This program will be available for the start of the farmers' market season in March 2019.

15. Please discuss how the \$25,000 in additional funding provided by the County Council in the FY 2019 approved budget was expended (or the Department's plans to expend approved funds) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to Health Program.

These funds are in the process of being contracted with the Institute for Creative Community Initiatives, who has operated the program in years past. This organization will provide food access to SNAP recipients in designated food deserts in the county. SNAP to Health provides low-income residents of Prince George's County who reside within designated food desert zips: 20743, 20745, and 20722, with healthier food choices, nutritional education, health literacy and community services by way of pop-up Farmers Markets. These markets allow for individuals who live a significant distance from grocery store and fresh food sources, the opportunity to utilize their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to purchase healthy food for their families.