



FY 2016 Recommended Budget Budget Question

Board Question #: 32

BUDGET QUESTIONS:

Are there metrics available that show that, as we put more money towards any given Social Services program, people are able to successfully exit the program?

RESPONSE:

There are multiple programs under the umbrella of the local social services department. Not all programs have specific outcome metrics that are captured at the local level or have outcomes that are solely attributable to or primarily influenced by social services involvement. Other factors not under Social Services control or influence that impact outcomes experienced by individuals/families receiving services are availability/accessibility of public transportation; appropriate employment opportunities within the region; access to affordable health care, availability of affordable housing, etc. Social services works to aid the individual and family in being as successful as possible in meeting the potential challenges and barriers in their environment.

There are some programs that have very measurable and established outcome metrics, such as re-occurrence of child abuse/neglect, rate of re-entry into foster care, reunification with prior home within 12 months, etc. Less direct program metrics are rate of child abuse/neglect within the community; children in foster care as a percentage of the community's population under the age of 18; youth who have aged out of foster care and are either in an accredited institution of higher education, a job apprenticeship program, or in full-time employment at a living wage; truancy rates; recidivism in the juvenile justice system; among others. Not all metrics listed are available at the local level due to population size or where information is collected.

For an example of a successful investment in social services programs, the County used to average 135 to 140 children in DSS custody per month as recently as in 2010. The agency has provided more training to staff in best practices in child welfare in all disciplines; encouraged the investigation of the availability and appropriateness of community-based services; brought children to the Community Services Act (CSA) process sooner to access potential interventions earlier in the case; invested in developing, integrating, and sustaining the best practice of Family Partnership Meetings in all areas of child welfare (Foster Care, Protective Services, Prevention) and the cumulative result is the agency now averages 75 to 85 children in care per month and extremely low rates of children reentering foster care once they are reunited with family. Adoptions have increased as special needs children are moved to more stable emotional and mental health and potential families are more informed and so better prepared to receive these children as permanent members of their families.

Spotsylvania Department of Social Services will provide the Board of Supervisors information on specific program outcome metrics upon request and as information on the specified program is available.

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Public Assistance Programs	
	SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) <i>formerly Food Stamps</i>
	Medicaid
	TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families)
	Energy Assistance
	VIEW (Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare)
Child Welfare Services	
	Prevention Services
	Family Educator
	Foster Care
	Child Protective Services
	Adoption
	Family Partnership/Engagement
Adult Services	
	In-home Services
	Guardianship
	Adult Protective Services
Comprehensive Services Act	
	Residential Treatment Services
	Community-based Services
	In-home Services