



A Message from the Jackson County Board of Social Services

The Jackson County Department of Social Services is a client-focused agency committed to serving individuals of all ages, from infants to senior citizens. We strive to be responsive and attuned to the needs of our community while upholding our responsibility to taxpayers by delivering services through cost-effective methods. Our team is dedicated to providing services efficiently and effectively, ensuring that every citizen receives professional, respectful, and courteous support.

This annual report highlights the activities and trends of Jackson County's Department of Social Services for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. It details the wide array of services offered by the agency, along with the number of clients served. This annual report reflects our commitment to transparency in the use of public funds entrusted to this department.

With Gratitude



Jackson County's Child Support Services acknowledges the vital support the Child Support program receives from our district court judges, the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, and the Jackson County Clerk of Court.

Standing, from left, are Sheriff Doug Farmer, Corporal C.B. Hooper, Child Support Supervisor Becky Green, Child Support Agent Jessica Ray, Child Support Clerk Karmon Dupree, Jackson County Clerk of Court-Deputy Clerk Debbie Buchanan, Child Support Attorney Mary Holliday, Child Support Agent Sarah McCoy and Captain Bill Waldroup. Seated is Judge Donna Forga presiding over the Child Support court session.

Contacts

Main Office/Sylva

15 Griffin St., Sylva
(Off NC 116, Webster Rd., Behind
Lowe's Home Improvement)

Hours

Mon.-Fri., 8am-5pm

Telephone

828-586-5546

After Hours Emergency

828-586-1911

Fax

Public Assistance Programs:

828-586-6270

All Other Services:

828-587-2099

Cherokee Office

1526 Acquoni Rd., Cherokee
(Near the Cherokee Expo Center)

Hours

Mon.-Fri., 7:45am-4:30pm

Telephone

828-497-4317

Fax

828-497-6916

Agency website: www.jcdss.org
To apply for North Carolina benefits and services

Cash Assistance - Energy Assistance
Food & Nutrition Services - Medicaid

Go To:

www.epass.nc.gov



JCDS staff participated in Hands on Jackson, an annual county-wide event during which volunteers provide assistance to folks who need a hand.



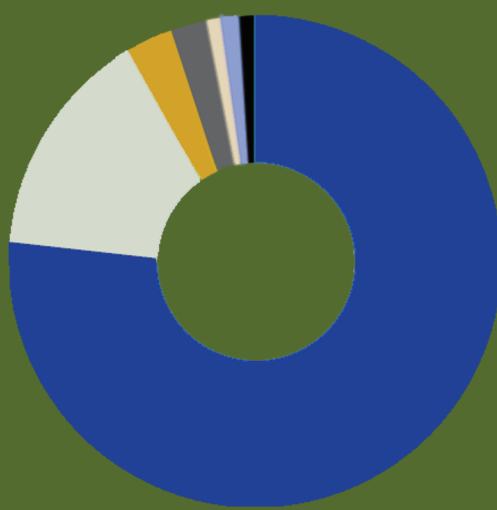
Jackson County
Department of Social Services

Strengthening Our Community

Annual Report 2024

Revenues & Expenditures

How We Were Funded in 2023-24



- 84% Medicaid Payments
- 7% Food & Nutrition Services
- 3% Public Assistance Administration
- 3% Social Work Services
- 1% Work First
- 1% Emergency Crisis Assistance
- 1% Other Expenditures

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Medicaid Payments	\$90,776,739.00
Food & Nutrition	\$8,015,502.00
Public Assistance Administration (Medicaid, Work First Family Assistance, Food & Nutrition Services, Special Assistance)	\$2,784,504.95
Social Work Services	\$2,881,653.17
Work First	\$1,258,636.04
Emergency Crisis Assistance (Low Income Energy Assistance, Fuel, Shelter, Utilities, Medicine)	\$84,313.80
Other Expenditures Include	
Foster Care	\$1,401,353.95
Child Support Services	\$510,577.05
Special Assistance (Adult Care Payments)	\$266,875.00
In-Home Services (Adult Day Care, Aide Services, Home Delivered Meals)	\$5,351.75
Adult Guardianship	\$4,003.02
Total	\$107,989,489.73

Budget Narrative

The Jackson County Department of Social Services (DSS) operates with a budget of **\$107,989,489.73**, allocated across funding sources and program areas to address the community's needs.

Funding Sources

- **Federal Funds: Amount: \$76,016,474.29**
Federal funds constitute the majority of DSS's budget and are vital for implementing large-scale assistance programs such as Medicaid and Food and Nutrition Services.
- **State Funds: Amount: \$26,788,190.33**
State funding enables DSS to implement mandated programs, including public assistance administration and social work services, with oversight and guidance provided by state agencies.
- **County Funds: Amount: \$4,458,078.11**
The County's contribution covers essential local needs, ensuring that the department can address region-specific challenges.
- **Other Funds: Amount: \$726,747.00**
Grant funds support specific initiatives, pilot programs, and innovative community interventions that complement public funding.

Program Expenditures

- **Medicaid Payments: Amount: \$90,776,739.00**
Medicaid is the cornerstone of DSS's budget, addressing healthcare needs for eligible low-income individuals and families. This allocation supports direct payments to providers and ensures access to medical, dental, and mental health services.
- **Food and Nutrition Services: Amount: \$8,015,502.00**
These funds support SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to combat food insecurity and provide critical assistance to families in need.
- **Public Assistance Administration: Amount: \$2,784,504.95**
This allocation supports the administrative functions required to effectively manage public assistance programs, including staff salaries, technology, and operational expenses.
- **Social Work Services: Amount: \$2,881,653.17**
Social work services funding ensures case management, family support services, child protective services, and foster care placement.
- **Work First: Amount: \$1,258,636.04**
The Work First program promotes self-sufficiency through employment and training services, providing temporary financial assistance to eligible families.
- **Emergency Crisis: Amount: \$84,313.80**
Emergency crisis funding addresses immediate, short-term needs for individuals and families facing unexpected hardships, including housing, utilities, and other critical services.
- **Other Expenditures: Amount: \$2,188,160.77**
This category funds ancillary programs, community outreach initiatives, and support for emerging community needs.

Conclusion

The Jackson County DSS budget reflects a robust, multi-faceted approach to supporting the community, with strategic investments in healthcare, food security, social services, and emergency support. This balanced allocation maximizes the impact of available resources, ensuring the department meets its mission to protect and improve the well-being of Jackson County residents.

Our Year in Service

Children

Child Protective Services

Reports of suspected child abuse, neglect and/or dependency are investigated. Services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Assistance is provided to other counties to ensure safety of children.

- 696 Responses to Reports of Abuse, Neglect and/or Dependency
- 101 Out-of-County Assists and Home Studies
- 180 nights spent by agency staff at the agency providing foster children with a safe place to live

Child Support Services

Assures that children receive adequate parental support by locating non-custodial parents, establishing paternity, establishing medical and financial support, and modifying and enforcing court ordered support obligations.

- 762 Active Cases
- 47 Paternities Established
- 69 New Support Orders
- 75 Support Orders Modified
- 198 Implemented Income Withholdings
- 1,668 Enforcement Actions Completed

Total Collections \$1,772,895.51
County Returns & Incentives Earned \$32,571

In-Home Services

Protects children in families where abuse and/or neglect are found. Social Workers engage families in activities designed to reduce risk, promote stability and bring about permanence for children.

- 33 Families Served
- 59 Children Served

Work First Family Assistance Program

Employment program for families with children living in the home. Child-only benefits are available to eligible non-parent relatives caring for minor children.

- 159 Applications Received
- 13 Average Monthly Cases

Foster Care Services

Children are placed in the responsibility of the agency through court ordered custody, voluntary placement agreements, or release for adoption. Permanency planning for children provides time-limited and goal-oriented care for children to achieve permanent families as soon as possible.

- 88 Children in Agency Custody As of 7/1/24
- 21 Children Entered Custody Through 6/30/24
- 27 Children Left Custody:
 - 0 Transferred to Another County
 - 0 Custody Dissolved
 - 19 Returned to Parents
 - 1 Guardianship/Custody to Others
 - 5 Children Adopted
 - 2 Children Aged Out
- 82 Children Remained in Agency Custody As of 6/30/24

Adoptions

Adoption provides children with legal permanency in safe, loving homes. Adoptions include agency adoptive placements, step-parent and relative adoptions, and independent adoptions arranged between birth parents and unrelated individuals.

- 5 Agency Adoptions Finalized
- 21 Agency Children Cleared for Adoption
- 38 Families Received Adoption Assistance for 58 Children to Help Offset the Costs of Adopting a Child with Disabilities or Special Needs
- 3 Children and 1 Family Received Guardianship Assistance



HIGHLIGHT!
Child Support Services collected three lump sum payments totaling **\$46,014.21**



Adult Protective

Adult Protective Service Evaluations

Reports of suspected abuse, neglect and/or exploitation are evaluated, and assessments are completed regarding the needs of disabled individuals 18 and older. Services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- 217 Responses to Reports of Abuse, Neglect and/or Exploitation

Guardianship Services

The Court appoints Social Services as guardian for elderly or disabled adults who are mentally incompetent and cannot make responsible decisions concerning their personal care or their finances.

- 35 Guardianship Clients Served

Protective Payee Services

Social Services is appointed by the Court, Social Security, or the Veterans Administration to receive and assure the appropriate use of benefit funds when individuals are unable to do so.

- 26 Payee Clients Served



BIG INCREASE!
Program Integrity investigations yielded \$40,533 in repayments **+1,962%** over last year

General

Shelter/Utility Assistance

The Crisis Intervention Program, Low-Income Energy Assistance, Work First Emergency Assistance, Duke Energy, Energy Neighbor, Emergency Food and Shelter Program, and Helping Each Member Cope are programs to assist people in an energy/shelter crisis. Together these seven programs accomplished the following:

1,254 Households Served
\$595,720.24 Total Payments
\$476 Avg. Payment

Program Integrity/Fraud Investigations

Public assistance cases are routinely investigated to assure accuracy and to address discrepancies. Repayment of benefits is pursued in cases of fraud and overpayment.

169 Cases Investigated

\$22,801	Medicaid Repayments
\$14,998	Food & Nutrition Services Repayments
\$2,734	Work First Repayments
\$40,533	Total Repayments
\$215,311	Dollar Amount for Claims Established

General Assistance

Assistance for families in a crisis situation
507 Households Served @ \$81 Avg. Payment
Total: \$40,774.56

Processing Support Services

11,345	Clients Seen in the Agency
13,096	Pieces of Regular Mail
349	Incoming Pieces of Courier Mail
13,417	Outgoing Pieces of Regular Mail
7	Outgoing Pieces of Courier Mail



Health Related

Medicaid/Special Assistance

Medicaid provides assistance with medical expenses for low income families with children, disabled adults, the elderly and other special populations.

Special Assistance provides a monthly payment to help pay the cost of facility placement or in-home care.

- 2,418 Applications Received
- 7,545 Reviews Completed

Food & Nutrition Services

Designed to raise the nutritional levels in low-income households by providing food assistance to supplement a household's food dollars.

- 2,678 Applications Received
- 1,702 Reviews
- 2,339 Avg. Monthly Cases

A satellite office in Cherokee also provides Food and Nutrition Services and Medicaid.

Medicaid Expansion

Expansion helps provide clients ages 19 through 62 and up to 138% of the federal poverty line most medical services. DSS supports the qualification process.

- 2,491 New Medicaid Cases for adults aged 19-62

Medical Transportation

Transportation to medical appointments is provided, arranged or reimbursed for individuals who are eligible for this service.

- 1,005 Clients Transported
- 3,666 Number of Trips Provided
- \$39,203 Payments to Clients
- \$346,003 Payments to Providers

Providers

\$62,717	Jackson County Transit
\$184,390	EBCI Mobility
\$34,442	MAGNET
\$35,700	Mtn. Area Transport
\$28,754	Charlie the Cabbie

Services for the Blind

Assistance is provided to blind/visually impaired clients through Independent Living (IL) Services. The Medical Eye Care Assistance program assists with exams, glasses, vision related surgery and referrals to other programs when funding is available.

- 15 Clients Received
- 8 New Clients Received
- 8 Case Closures for Clients
- 4 Medical Eye Care Clinics Served
- 5 Clients Referred to Other Resources for Assistance



EXPANSION HELPS
Medicaid Expansion leads to **2,491** new cases for adults aged **19-62**