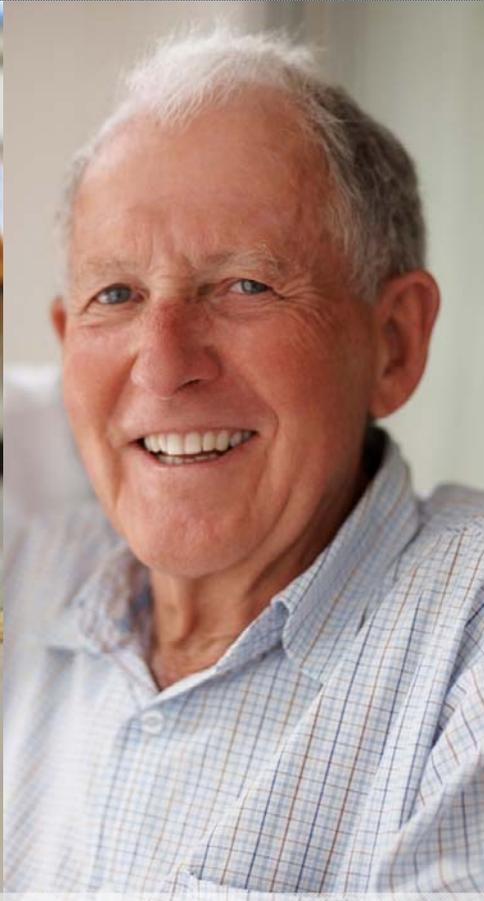


# TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



## Annual Report Fiscal Year 2010 - 2011

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF  
HUMAN SERVICES



*Helping shape Tennessee lives.*

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# OUR MISSION

*To improve the well-being of Tennesseans who are economically disadvantaged, vulnerable or living with disabilities through a network of financial, employment, protective and rehabilitative services.*

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## A WORD FROM THE COMMISSIONER



Greetings Fellow Tennesseans,

I want to take this opportunity to thank the employees of the Department of Human Services for their dedication and commitment. Please know that we appreciate all that you continue to do on behalf of DHS, those we serve, and the State of Tennessee. And I also want to send a special “thank you” to the people of Tennessee for your support of these much needed services for adults and families.

Our FY 2010-2011 Annual Report will reflect the continued commitment of our staff to serving more than one million Tennesseans on an ongoing basis. The demand for our services continues to rise, yet the number of staff remains the same. We are in a constant mode of identifying efficiencies to help staff manage the increased workload so that we can provide the best customer service.

The following are some highlights of the year:

- Total collections for Child Support in Tennessee reached an all-time state high of \$628 million for fiscal year 2011, representing an average daily collection of \$1.7 million.
- An average of nearly \$171 million was issued in SNAP benefits each month during the state fiscal year 2011, providing \$2 billion in economic activity to the Tennessee economy.
- Due to extreme spring storms more than 7,000 households received in excess of \$3.3 million Disaster SNAP assistance.

The new normal requires us to continue to find new ways to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Moving forward we will continue our Top to Bottom Review process which we are calling the DHS 360°. This process will have a focus on streamlining, increased accountability, high performance, and fiscal stewardship. The DHS team works in partnership with our customers, community partners, legislators, other state agencies, and the people of Tennessee in our combined efforts to fulfill the DHS mission and to build a stronger Tennessee.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the Department of Human Services. We count it as an honor to be able to serve the people of Tennessee who benefit from the very important services we provide in their journey toward self-sufficiency and a better quality of life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "De Raquel Holder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT

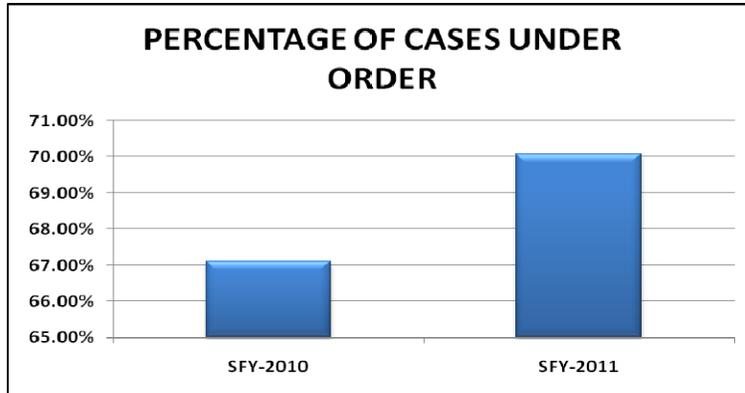
Tennessee's Child Support program has offices in each of the state's 31 Judicial Districts providing the following core services: locating parents; establishing paternity; establishing and enforcing financial and medical support orders; reviewing and adjusting support orders; collecting and disbursing child support collections. In addition to these core services, the Child Support Program impacts families in other significant ways. The following success story illustrates the impact child support has on Tennessee's children and families.

### SUCCESS STORY:

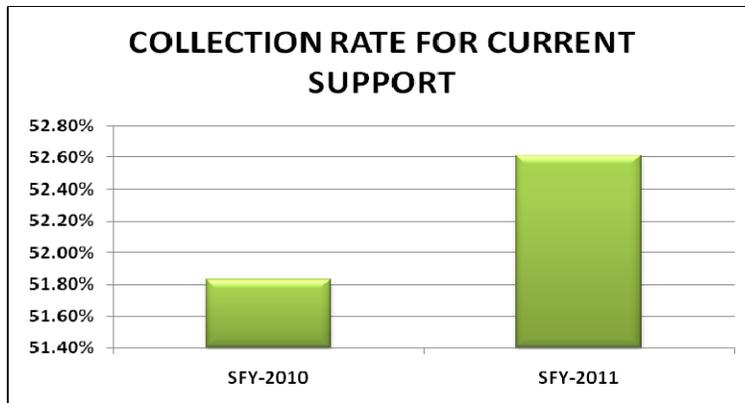
"George's" life was changed when his ex-wife and children moved out of state and he lost contact with them. When a court order informed him that his children were in the custody of his stepson, the court order was modified to reflect the change in circumstances. "George" was thankful for the court order because it offered him the chance to communicate with his stepson and to get back in touch with his children. Now, "George" and his stepson have joint custody of the children. "George" is now thrilled to be back in touch with his children.



*"... the summer visit with my children was wonderful and my oldest daughter has said she wants to come to the University of Tennessee in Knoxville upon her graduation from high school. I am so grateful to have the connection with my kids and am thankful for the help and hope you gave me ... I started my welding business up again, am making payments as I can and am glad to be able to pay on my obligation."*



The percentage of cases under order increased from 67.11% in June 2010 to 70.08% in June 2011.



The child support collection rate for current support increased from 51.83% to 52.61%.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Tennessee has the 8<sup>th</sup> largest child support caseload in the nation with a six-month average of 451,107 cases.
- The Child Support program in Tennessee is very cost-effective collecting \$6.68 for every \$1 spent (ranking our program #9 of 54).
- Total collections for child support in Tennessee reached a state all-time high of \$628,019,229 for FY 2011; representing an average daily collection of more than \$1.7 million.
- Up to 50% of the unemployment benefits received by obligated parents was applied against court-ordered child support for a cumulative total of \$22 million.
- During the 2011 fiscal year, the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District increased child support collections by 8.64%, the highest percentage increase for any judicial district in Tennessee. The Phone Tree project operated by the 4th Judicial District is now serving a total of 14 judicial districts. In the month of June 2011, 11,394 calls were made, leading to the payment of \$22,018.55 in child support.

## **DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES**

The Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is the designated state unit primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation of individuals with physical and mental disabilities.

### **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**

The Division of Rehabilitation Services is responsible for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program which includes the determination of eligibility, the determination of the nature and scope of services, and the provision of rehabilitation services for individuals consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice so they may prepare for and engage in employment.

## **SUCCESS STORY:**

In February 2011, “Mark” was selected by the Staff Advisory Council of the Division of Rehabilitation Services as Client of the Year for FY 2010 for his perseverance.

Diagnosed with Neurotic Disorder with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Dysthymic Disorder, Generalized anxiety, and Cannabis Abuse (early full remission), “Mark” was recognized for his successful transition from high school to community college where he graduated with a 3.676 GPA. “Mark’s” journey was not easy. As an undergraduate and a graduate student he worked full time to help support his parents when they became ill. “Mark’s” determination and positive outlook paid off. He continued his education and graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Criminal Justice. Through the encouragement and assistance from a TRC Employment Counselor, he secured full-time employment as a probation and parole officer with the State of Tennessee.

*“Services offered by Vocational Rehabilitation and the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center at Winchester helped me achieve more than I could have imagined ... without services I don’t know where I would be. It was a beacon of light during a dark time of my life.”*

**“Mark”, Client  
TRC (Winchester)**



## **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- AT&T and Memphis VR staff partnered to develop a pilot program to hire individuals with disabilities to work at the local AT&T warehouse distribution center. This project, which will be replicated in other states, included VR, our community partner Goodwill of Memphis, Spherion Staffing Services and AT&T. Currently, there are 17 clients working at the AT&T warehouse in Memphis; six are permanent AT&T employees and eleven are working through Spherion with hopes of becoming permanent AT&T employees.
- The warehouse training program, developed at Goodwill, has provided training for clients to prepare them for employment with a variety of companies.

## **SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED and SERVICES FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired and Services for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing are integral parts of the Division of Rehabilitation Services. This unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with vision or hearing loss. Additionally, the unit provides specialized independent living services to individuals who are blind and also operates the Tennessee Business Enterprises Program which provides entrepreneurial opportunities for legally blind individuals who are operating food service facilities in government buildings.

### **SUCCESS STORY:**

“Mary” came to Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired in 2008 when she applied for vocational rehabilitation services. She had been diagnosed in 2007 with retinitis pigmentosa – a progressive condition that eventually leads to total blindness. “Mary” worked as a teacher’s assistant in a preschool. Her job barely paid minimum wage, however, she enjoyed being in the classroom and helping children. The job became increasingly difficult for “Mary.” As her vision began to deteriorate, she found distances and low-light settings posed challenges.

A chance encounter changed “Mary’s” life when a mutual friend introduced her to Debra Gregory, a blind vendor in the Tennessee Business Enterprises (TBE) Program. Debra explained the entrepreneurial opportunities TBE affords individuals who are legally blind. “Mary” knew this was something she wanted to do.



“Mary’s” VR Counselor guided her through evaluation and training to reach her goal. In June of 2009, she finished her entry-level training and immediately became the manager of a local café. “Mary’s” vibrant personality won over customers and the café under her management increased sales by 83%, and annual net profit increased fourfold. When tornadoes forced some employees to work all night, she provided free food. When snow bombarded the area, she stayed in a hotel next door so she could get to the café the next day to ensure employees who made it to work would have food to eat.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- VR Counselors for the Blind exceeded their goals and increased the number of successful outcomes by 5% (meaning more people with vision impairments were successfully placed into employment).
- VR Counselors for the Deaf exceeded their goals and increased the number of successful work placements by 23%.

- The Independent Living Services for Older Blind Individuals served 1,272 individuals over the age of 55 who are experiencing vision loss.
- The Tennessee Business Enterprises Program increased sales by 5% to \$22,545,470 and average earnings per blind vendor increased by 14% to \$62,009 annually.
- TBE opened new inmate jail commissaries in Washington, Hamilton, Bledsoe, Cannon, and Smith Counties creating new opportunities for blind vendors.
- Video phones were provided to 13 vocational rehabilitation counselors to better communicate with their clients who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

### **TENNESSEE COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

The Tennessee Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TCDHH) exists to serve as an advocate for services affecting Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind persons through coordination, public awareness, and consultation in areas of public service, health care, education, and employment.

#### **SUCCESS STORY:**

“Christopher” applied for a job in Nashville General Services. A great candidate with some hearing loss, “Christopher” had to pass the CDL License Exam which requires an individual to have 40 decibels or greater hearing.

After considerable research, TCDHH learned from the Tennessee Department of Safety that “Christopher” could qualify for a CDL with restricted use and work for the city, county, or state. Today, “Christopher” loves his job as a full-time employee with Nashville General Services and is the office’s first Deaf employee.



### **COMMUNITY TENNESSEE REHABILITATION CENTERS**

Seventeen community Tennessee Rehabilitation Centers across the state provide employment related services (job readiness training and job placement assistance) to applicants and eligible clients of Vocational Rehabilitation. Vocational evaluation, employee development, and employment services are designed to assist the client with identifying an appropriate vocational goal and assisting them with attaining essential work behaviors to achieve and maintain employment.

## **SUCCESS STORY:**

*"TRC has made me feel better about myself and raised my self-esteem. The center has shown me that I CAN work by showing me how to work pieces. If I ever have questions everyone takes their time to walk me thru it ... I am nervous around a lot of people that I don't know but classes are giving me the chance to come out of my shell, not wanting to talk to people. You have helped me with my reading by taking time to figure how you could help me...You check on us if we are out of work for a few days because we are sick or whatever and treat us like humans not just like I'm doing my job, you really are. I think there should be more places like this all over the world. There are a lot of places that don't pay attention to people that have a disability or reading problem and a lot of people don't try to help ... I decided that I wanted to do something more for myself than sit at home and draw a check. I wanted to learn new skills and that's what I have got here at the center."*

**"John", Client**  
**Employee Development Services**  
**TRC (Paris)**

## **STATISTICS:**

The 17 Community Tennessee Rehabilitation Centers successfully partnered with 64 local employers across the state to secure contract work in the Employee Development (ED) program.

- 506 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients were referred to the TRC's Employee Development program.
- 459 VR clients were admitted for ED services to prepare them for work.
- 404 VR clients successfully completed the ED program and secured employment or obtained vocational training.
- Clients participating in TRC ED programs earned a cumulative total of \$585,755.63 in training wages.
- Combined program income earnings totaled \$739,538.32.

The Community TRCs received referrals to assist 673 VR clients with employment activities including career counseling, employment readiness training, job search activities and job placement assistance.

- 334 clients were successfully employed.

- 154 clients were placed and are being monitored to ensure successful placements.
- 488 clients are currently employed and earning an average of \$222.06 a week.

### **TENNESSEE REHABILITATION CENTER AT SMYRNA**

Serving all 95 counties across the state, the Tennessee Rehabilitation Center in Smyrna is a residential facility which provides vocational rehabilitation services. TRC in Smyrna provides comprehensive vocational evaluation, pre-vocational and vocational training, vision impairment, traumatic brain injury, physical rehabilitation, and transitional life skills training services.

#### **SUCCESS STORY:**

“Brian” was referred to TRC by his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Barbara Rowe for Vision Impairment Services. “Brian” lost his vision and is now totally blind. He received instruction in Orientation and Mobility, Braille, Adaptive Kitchen Skills, Home and Personal Management, Adaptive Communication Skills and English as a second language while enrolled in the Vision Impairment Services program. At the completion of his Vision Impairment Services program at TRC, staff worked closely with “Brian” and his field counselor to secure employment. Currently, “Brian” is employed at a local restaurant. His employer said, “Having a blind star has really brought out great citizenship characteristics in ‘Brian’s’ coworkers. He has brought more diversity and tolerance of special needs into the work place. It is our responsibility and part of our culture to give people an opportunity to work and be a productive part of our team. We hired ‘Brian’ because of the strong support team he has in place. TRC obviously cares about the people they are helping. ‘Brian’ is a special case, the physical challenges and cultural changes and expectations of the workplace were very hard for him to adapt seamlessly into a busy work environment.”

*“I had so many positive experiences at TRC. The teachers are great! They taught me mobility, Braille, cleaning, and kitchen skills that have helped me to live more independently. The mobility and cleaning instruction have really helped me on the job because my duties are to clean, stack and load the dishwashers. The Vision Impairment Services staff took me to look for work and to the job fair that helped me get my job. They stuck with me until I found the job, provided me with encouragement to ensure I keep the job and keep in contact with me with ongoing encouragement.”*

**“Brian”, Client  
TRC (Smyrna)**



**STATISTICS:**

**PROGRAM COMPLETION**

Percentage of Clients Successfully Completing  
Primary Programs of Services

<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
97%	94%	92%	93%

**HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Provided rehabilitation services to 1,176 individuals with disabilities in primary service programs, mobile off-campus services and special assessments. The customer satisfaction average rating across all primary programs of services was 99% for FY 2011 with an average program utilization rate of 98%. Referral application acceptance rate for the fiscal year was 98%.
- Dr. Bill Norwood, chief psychologist and assistant superintendent of Vocational Services, was the DRS statewide consultant for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and initiated staff training in DRS Regions 4 and 7 regarding ASD issues, needs and service delivery.
- Implemented a certified crisis response team as first responders for medical emergencies on campus. Thirty-two staff volunteers were activated as TRC's First Responder Crisis Response Team following certification in CPR and AED (defibrillation) training.
- Obtained a three-year accreditation, the highest accrediting rating available, from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation Services, Employee Development Services, and Employment Skills Training Services.

**TENNESSEE TECHNOLOGY ACCESS PROGRAM**

This program provides community-based programs and services to individuals with disabilities (and their families) who may benefit from assistive technology to increase or maintain their independence and support their integration into the workforce.

## **DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES**

DDS is fully funded by the Social Security Administration and processes Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applications for the Social Security Administration.

The Division of Adult and Family Services and DDS teamed up to provide special processing to clients receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits. As TANF is, in fact, temporary in nature, it is considered a success if clients move toward a more long-term financial plan. DDS was able to allow 52% of the disability claims filed by the TANF population DHS serves on a temporary basis, providing them with longer term income and healthcare benefits.

### **STATISTICS:**

The average Title 16 benefit during state fiscal year 2011 was \$546 per month or \$6,552 per year. The 25 TANF cases approved for disability benefits by DDS yielded \$163,800 per year collectively in payments to families and the state.

Similarly, DDS adjudicates claims involving rare and debilitating diseases identified and defined by Social Security Administration as “compassionate allowance” considerations.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- DDS has designated staff to participate in the Cooperative Disability Investigations unit which is funded by the Social Security Administration, and utilizes the investigative skills of Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and SSA’s Office of Inspector General. During the 2010-11 fiscal year, staff investigated 82 claims and saved taxpayers a total of \$10,883,815 in expected benefits had these claimants been allowed benefits. The reports of the CDI unit led, in part, to a denial of those claims.
- DDS processed 1,483 claims alleging the existence of one or more of these diseases and found that 1,412 or 95% of them warranted allowance decisions.
- DDS adjudicated 138,816 total claims, yielding 256 claims processed per employee compared to 233 last fiscal year.

## **DIVISION OF APPEALS AND HEARINGS**

The Division of Appeals and Hearings routinely conducts customer service reviews from appellants who have filed an appeal regarding the denial and/or termination of benefits from the Department of Human Services.

### **STATISTICS:**

In fiscal year 2011, the Division of Appeals and Hearings:

- Processed an average of 150 incoming appeals on a daily basis;
- Litigated over 300 appeal actions; and
- Improved overdue processing times from a monthly average high of 18% to a monthly average low of 11%.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Transitioned Order Implementation Unit to Quality Assurance Division.
- Eliminated delay for implementation of orders from months to a few days.
- Conducted Strategic Plan development with Appeals and Hearings' staff.
- Implemented successful flexible staffing for eligible staff.
- Doubled percentage of resolution of appeals through conciliation.
- Assisted with finalizing design for all four iterations of the ARTS Rewrite.

## **OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL**

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) provides legal advice and legal representation in judicial and administrative litigation affecting all department programs. Attorneys with the OGC prepare departmental rules affecting program implementation, conduct analyses of legislation affecting the department, prepare legislation for the department, and represent the department before the Tennessee General Assembly. The OGC reviews contract proposals for the provision of services for implementation of department programs. The OGC also provides compliance oversight and training involving Titles VI, VII and IX, ADA, HIPAA, and Motor Voter registration as well as processing civil rights, EEOC, and Human Rights Commission complaints involving program services and department employees. Attorneys with the OGC also review proposed disciplinary actions involving employees and litigate department personnel actions. The OGC provides ongoing legal training for legal and program staff in the Adult Protective Services, Child and Adult Care licensing, and Child Support programs. Additionally, the OGC works closely with the State Attorney General's Office in federal and appellate litigation involving department programs.

**STATISTICS:**

In fiscal year 2011, the attorneys in OGC's Field Litigation Unit handled 310 Adult Protective Services cases, 218 Child Care Licensing / Assessment cases, 289 Child Care Safety Plans, and 15 criminal exclusion / waiver appeals, in addition to handling other regular responsibilities such as employment actions, benefit appeals for the Vocational Rehabilitation program, Blind Vendor litigation, Community Spouse Resource Allocation cases for Medicaid eligibility, and subpoenas for departmental records, etc. The number of cases handled by the Field Litigation Unit represents a significant increase in the number of cases handled in prior years, especially with respect to child care licensing cases which is attributed to improvements implemented in the enforcement process.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- OGC attorneys and Adult Protective Services program staff have addressed, through the filing of protective custody complaints and conservatorships, the increasing problem of financial exploitation of vulnerable adults, which leads to neglect of their shelter and health needs because their funds have been misappropriated by relatives or other persons.
- The OGC attorneys assigned to the Child Support program have trained fifty-six new child support attorneys and provided a Continuing Legal Education speaker on child support issues for CLE courses presented to the domestic relations bar by the Tennessee Attorneys Memo, the Tennessee Bar Association, Maximus Child Support Services in Memphis, and PSI Child Support Services in Nashville. The department's child support attorneys in the 4th Judicial District, together with child support program staff, established paternity for 5,684 children, achieved an increase in the number of cases with support orders from 6,570 to 7,525, and collected and distributed \$6,437,426.01 in current child support.
- The attorneys in the Litigation and Case Preparation Units of the OGC represented the department in 293 administrative appeals against outside opposing counsel. These attorneys also represented the department in 12 judicial actions involving department assistance programs throughout the year filed in either circuit, chancery or probate court.

## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

The Office of Inspector General includes oversight of the department's independent accountability functions. Those functions include internal audit, investigations, quality control and program review. This office conducts compliance and quality control reviews of DHS programs, investigates referrals of (possible) fraud and abuse in the programs, handles adjudication and processes collections of claims overpayment, and conducts internal audits and investigations for the department.

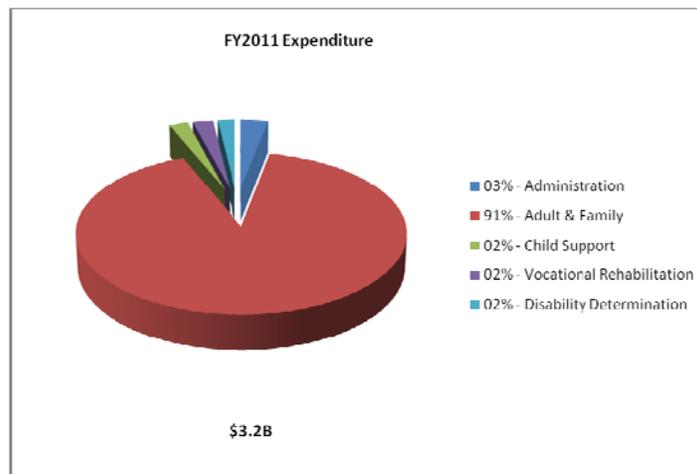
### STATISTICS/ HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

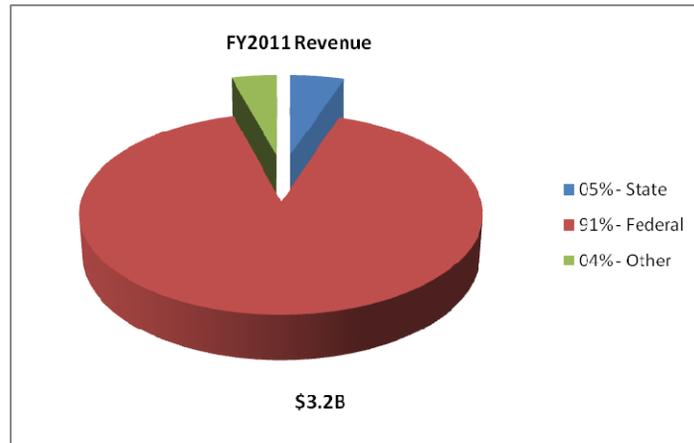
- Investigations section collected \$10,066,571 in claims last fiscal year.
- Concluded a successful transition to a new fingerprint/background check vendor completing 25,000 criminal background checks in FY 2010-2011.

## DIVISION OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Division of Finance and Administration prepares the annual departmental budget submission; processes contractor/vendor payments; prepares federal expenditure reports; ensures the procurement of all goods and services, provides support for functions such as mail operations and telecommunications; performs ongoing fiscal analysis; and monitors federal programs for cash management. The department's budget was approximately \$3.2 billion.

The Information Systems section supports the department's strategic plan with a technology strategy that provides for the basic infrastructure and technical support to meet operations needs; includes partnering with senior management to develop and implement projects and/or initiatives to support the mission and program requirements of the agency; and facilitates coordination and collaboration with the Office of Information Resources (OIR), other state agencies, and federal business partners.





**HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Implemented Family Assistance Renewal Applications scanning for Pilot Counties.
- Completed the LexMark Secure Print application installation for DHS.
- Released the RFP and awarded a contract for the requirements definition phase of the Tennessee Child Support Enforcement System (TCSES) Modernization Project.
- Implemented major enhancements to the Tennessee Food Programs application (TNFoods) to comply with Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.
- Completed Iteration 1 and the Construction Phase for Iterations 2, 3, and 4 of the ARTS Re-write project - Phase One.
- Designed, tested, and implemented major enhancements to the Automated Client Certification Eligibility Network for Tennessee (ACCENT) system and the On-line Appointment Tracking System (OATS) to support the SSD initiative.

**DIVISION OF ADULT & FAMILY SERVICES**

The Division of Adult and Family Services provides public assistance to low-income citizens directly through the county offices and indirectly through contracts with social services agencies across the state.

AFS has offices in all 95 Tennessee counties offering resources to citizens across the state. This division provides assistance for families to meet basic needs including paying living expenses, offering assistance through Families First, the department’s TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) program, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps). TennCare Medicaid, the state and federal medical assistance program for families with children, elderly and/or disabled citizens is also a function of this division.

AFS partners with community agencies to assist families with additional income/resources to obtain employment and increase the likelihood of becoming self sufficient. In addition, sections under Adult and Family Services are responsible for protecting vulnerable adults and licensing regulating child care and adult day care agencies.

## **FAMILY ASSISTANCE**

### **FAMILIES FIRST**

Families First emphasizes work, training, and personal responsibility. To be eligible for the program, participants must meet technical and financial eligibility standards and agree to follow a Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP). As part of the PRP, the participant agrees to keep immunizations and health checks up to date for their children, keep their children in school, cooperate with child support services, and, if not exempt, participate in work and/or training for at least 30 hours per week. The average monthly caseload for July 2010 – May 2011 was 62,461, a 7% increase over FY 2010.

Tennessee is divided into five geographical zones each supported by work activity contractors who provide services to support TANF clients who are required to have a work activity. The contractors are paid for performance that focuses on job placement, job retention, GED and Vocational Education completions, and enabling the State of Tennessee to meet the federal work participation mandates. The contractor works with the client to develop an individualized career plan focused on employment and also provides necessary support services such as transportation to allow the client to be successful with his/her career plan.

To support the Families First program, DHS client representatives in each of our local county offices builds relationships with participants to help ensure successful engagement with the work activity contractor and positive employment outcomes.

Policies are also in place to ensure DHS clients with disabilities have the opportunity to fully participate in the Families First program. Clients are offered screenings for barriers that would potentially make it difficult for them to complete the application/interview process. A secondary screening is available for those clients with a work requirement to ascertain if there are potential ADA-related barriers that would make participation in a work or training activity difficult. Clients with suspected mental health barriers or learning disabilities are referred to a Family Services Counselor, provided by contract agencies, for further assessment to determine the type of barrier, how it will affect the individual's participation in the Families First program, and what accommodation, if any, will be needed.

### **SUCCESS STORY:**

“Beverly” applied for Families First and the Child Care Certificate Program for herself and her four-year-old daughter in January 2008, five months after her husband’s death from leukemia. At the time of her application she was already enrolled full-time in the nursing program, the GI Bill and Pell grants assisted her with school and some living expenses.



“Beverly” reported she was pregnant with twins due in February 2009 and, in August 2008, she was put on bed rest. Her twins were born in January 2009. Being a single mother of three slowed her progress in getting her degree, but did not stop it. She returned to school after her twins were born and picked up a part time job cleaning houses for a real estate company two days a week. In the fall of 2010, she stopped working to concentrate on her last few months of school. In December 2010, “Beverly” reached her goal. She graduated with her nursing degree and, in addition,

managed to keep the home she and her husband had purchased.

Two months later in February 2011, “Beverly” was hired by a local hospital and is now working full time.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- In a survey administered last fall and winter, 45.8% participants in the Families First program who transitioned out were shortly thereafter employed, compared to 46% in the prior year’s survey.
- A small increase in the average percentage of cases closed for income (from 12% to 13%) indicated more than 700 additional cases were closed for employment in this year than last.

#### **CHILD CARE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**

The Child Care Certificate Program provides assistance to families who need help paying for child care in order to meet the requirements of the Families First program. Parents leaving the program with a job receive transitional assistance to support their move from welfare to work. Other categories of the program provide assistance to teen parents and to children deemed eligible by the Department of Children’s Services based on a connection to the child welfare system.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- The accomplishments of the Child Care Certificate Program generally mirror the successes of the Families First program with the exception of the Teen Parent Program.
- The Teen Parent Child Care Program is targeted toward teen parents in high school who are not eligible for (or do not want) Families First assistance. This program has always had a small number of participants, however, ripple effects on helping a teen, the

individual's family, the community, and the State of Tennessee, make every graduation an important accomplishment. At the end of this state fiscal year, 67 teens were enrolled in the program. During the months of May and June 2011, a total of 27 students graduated from high school.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps)**

SNAP helps eligible low-income individuals and families purchase or supplement the food they need for good health and nutrition.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Each day in state fiscal year 2011, the SNAP helped put food on the table for 605,799 Tennessee households containing 1,270,158 individuals. This represents 20% of Tennesseans who relied on SNAP for food assistance. An average \$170,559,379 was issued in SNAP benefits each month during state fiscal year 2011, providing \$2 billion in economic activity for the Tennessee economy.
- The 2002 Farm Bill authorized USDA to provide awards to states that demonstrated high or improved performance in the administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. These awards recognize the importance of customer service in administering this critical nutrition program. Awards were given to states with the best or most improved program access index--the ratio of participants to the number of people living below 125 percent of poverty. Twelve million dollars was divided among the four states with the highest; and the four states with the most improved program access index. In September 2010, Tennessee was recognized as one of the four states with the highest program access index. As a result of this achievement, Tennessee received a bonus award of \$3.9 million, marking the fifth consecutive year the state has received this award.
- SNAP was quick to address the needs of victims of the statewide tornadoes and flooding that occurred in April and May 2011. More than 7,000 households received in excess of \$3.3 million through the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. An additional 3,500 households that were already on the SNAP received a supplemental issuance due to disasters.

### **TENNCARE/MEDICAID**

The Department of Finance and Administration's TennCare Bureau contracts with DHS to determine Medicaid and TennCare Standard (including Standard Spend Down) eligibility. DHS determines eligibility, the possible categories of coverage and sends data to the TennCare Bureau via an electronic interface between the ACCENT and InterChange systems. This data is used by TennCare to open Medicaid or TennCare coverage when an individual has been

approved, and to terminate coverage when an individual is no longer eligible to receive Medicaid or TennCare Standard.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- DHS staff approved 386,537 Medicaid cases in fiscal year 2010-2011. On average, DHS staff processed 72,559 Medicaid applications per month and approved 32,211 cases per month.
- DHS started the reverification/renewal process for TennCare Standard Children. The initial group of 38,000 TennCare Standard Children due for renewal were mailed renewal packets (3,000/month) beginning in April 2011. This review is to determine whether the children remain eligible for TennCare Standard, are now TennCare Medicaid eligible, or are no longer eligible for benefits.

#### **FAMILY ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

##### **OFFICE FOR LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Family Assistance Office for Learning and Professional Development (OLPD), with the cooperation of the district and Family Assistance Service Center field training staff, strives to create and present “blended-learning” training modules and “finger-tip” policy information tools for Family Assistance eligibility staff. Challenge-based learning opportunities are used to prepare new Family Assistance eligibility staff for their roles in eligibility determination, as well as to provide continuing education on new policy and procedures, refresher training, soft skills training, and computer training for all Family Assistance staff. The OLPD is continuously developing series of professional development opportunities, in addition to policy training, that will enhance job skills and prepare staff to evolve in their profession and with the department.

##### **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Performance Management Unit, in collaboration with the Office of Learning and Professional Development (OLPD) and the Research Unit, is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Talent Management initiative statewide for the Family Assistance Unit. This includes providing technical assistance to field offices and district management, generating monthly data reports for our district offices, developing strategies in conjunction with district management to address issues with performance, and working closely with OLPD to identify training needs to address gaps in performance.

##### **RESEARCH AND DATA MANAGEMENT**

The Research and Data Management Unit conducts research, policy analysis, program planning and evaluation. The primary responsibility is to ensure the Family Assistance Unit has the data

necessary to design effective policies and to implement new strategies. The unit collects and analyzes program information from a variety of sources, and distributes scheduled and ad hoc reports to various units within Family Assistance. In addition, the unit is also responsible for mandatory federal reports for the Families First program on an annual basis, and working with Information Systems to ensure Families First data is transmitted correctly to the federal TANF agency.

The Research and Data Management Unit strives to provide quality quantitative and qualitative data support analysis for the purpose of ensuring best program practice implementation for Family Assistance employees and clients.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- During state fiscal year 2011, the OLPD provided 47,216 training opportunities for 7,500 DHS staff and contractors, including: 11,356 individual classroom training opportunities for DHS staff in all divisions through a series of blended learning experiences including classroom training, computer-based training, and individual on-line training; and developed, built, and coordinated 35,860 online training opportunities, with assessments, that were accessed and tracked through the TDHS Learning Management and Training Assessment System.

#### **FAMILY ASSISTANCE SERVICE CENTER**

The Family Assistance Service Center (FASC) responds to client inquiries and changes reported by clients in the Family Assistance programs.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Routinely, the FASC demonstrates the ability to handle call volume of 1 million calls annually. In fiscal year 2011, call center employees responded to 1,144,854 calls, and in 2011, 1,113,789 calls were served. The Family Assistance Service Center provides an effective and convenient method of communication for our LEP population. In fiscal year 2011, DHS utilized World Wide Interpreter Services (WWI) on 51,335 occasions with an approximate talk time of 9,632 hours.
- Throughout the FASC sites more than 1,000,000 work orders (actions in response to calls/reported changes) were completed in fiscal year 2011. Encompassed in this total are client reported changes, State Office inquiries, special projects to assist county office and work completed on behalf of the Bureau of TennCare.
- The FASC assisted with open enrollments for Standard Spend Down in October 2010 and February 2011. FASC personnel were responsible for taking approximately 2,500 to 2,800 calls each session. The primary role of FASC operators during Standard Spend

Down is to collect basic information from each caller and enter it into a database to be processed. Applications are then sent to all callers who are not already TennCare clients.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)**

The CSBG program is funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is administered through a statewide network of 20 non-profit and local government agencies designated by Health and Human Services as eligible to provide services. Agencies conduct annual needs assessments, develop a community action plan, and offer services based on identified local needs. The goal of the program is to provide services to eligible low-income individuals and families to improve their health and well-being.

#### **HIGHLIGHT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- 315,463 low-income individuals received services under the regular CSBG program in FY 2011.

### **LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)**

The LIHEAP program is funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is administered through a network of 19 local non-profit and governmental agencies. The program is designed to assist eligible low-income households with their home energy cost through credits to their energy supplier accounts.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- 173,321 households were assisted through the LIHEAP.
- Utility cut off program prevented severance of service for 58,832 households.

### **SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (SSBG)**

The SSBG program is funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is administered by 15 local nonprofit and governmental agencies across the state. The program functions as the primary support network for elderly and disabled adults to help them maintain independence or prevent adult abuse, neglect and exploitation.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Funded 15 agencies statewide to provide over \$3.5 million in federal funds to provide 2,800 low-income and disabled Tennesseans with Adult Day Care and Homemaker services.
- Agencies also provided over \$908,371 in matching funds.

- Funding received through the Department of Human Service’s SSBG Homemaker grants has enabled:
  - identification, reduction, prevention, and/or elimination of incidents of abuse, neglect, and exploitation among vulnerable adults in Tennessee;
  - coordination of services including an increased knowledge & understanding of community resources available to vulnerable adults referred to Homemaker Program by APS as well as an increased access to & use of community resources;
  - increased socialization of vulnerable adults;
  - increased access to & use of health care; and
  - improved quality of life.

**WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (WAP, WAP ARRA)**

The WAP program is funded through the U.S. Department of Energy and is administered by 18 local non-profit and governmental agencies across the state. The purpose of the Weatherization Assistance Program is to increase the energy efficiency of residential dwellings owned or occupied by low-income persons. Funding was provided to the regular WAP program and to the WAP ARRA (American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009).

**HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- In FY 2011, 11,184 homes were weatherized in Tennessee.

**CHILD & ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)**

**HIGHLIGHT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Reimbursements were provided for 39,080,834 meals served to a daily average of 73,363 participants at 3,024 feeding sites.

**SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP)**

**HIGHLIGHT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Reimbursements were provided for 2,648,458 meals served to a daily average of 42,412 participants at 1,498 feeding sites.

## **CHILD CARE SERVICES**

### **Child Care Licensing, Assessment, and Small Business Services**

The Child Care Services section plans, implements, and coordinates activities and programs to increase the quality, accessibility and availability of child care.

Child Care Licensing is a regulatory function ensuring child care centers and homes meet or exceed established standards for health, safety, and child development. Child Care Licensing program evaluators make one annual evaluation visit to each licensed provider and as team make approximately 17,000 unannounced visits to nearly 3,300 programs during a year.

Child Care Assessment staff use a quality measurement instrument to assess each licensed provider annually and establish the Star-Quality Report Card Rating and Evaluation System for facilities.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- The previous year's high point of quality child care in Tennessee continued with more than 65% of centers and over 57% of family and group homes achieving a 3-Star rating, the highest rating captured on the evaluation and report card. After nearly a decade of implementing the Star-Quality Report Card Rating and Evaluation System, more than 83% of all licensed providers achieved a one, two or three star rating.
- The department developed ten additional on-line training modules within the Tennessee Child Care Online Training System (TCCOTS). This format allows licensed child care staff to complete required training hours in a non-traditional format. All training hours are offered at no cost to Tennessee licensed child care providers.
- Data currently available through the first three quarters of the fiscal year from July 2010 through March 2011 indicates the CCR&R Network provided technical assistance, targeted technical assistance, and TN-CCPT training to over 26,000 caregivers. 100% of the DHS-licensed child care facilities were served by the CCR&R Network during this time period.

## **ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

Adult Protective Services (APS) is the only service in Tennessee mandated to intervene when adults with mental and/or physical impairments are in danger because they are unable to provide for their own needs or when others, who are responsible for their care, either abuse, neglect or exploit them.

APS field operations consists of approximately 130 staff members who are directed and supported by the central office APS section.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- World Elder Abuse Day was marked on June 15 with APS employees, community partners and supporters including Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam and First Lady Chrissy Haslam wearing purple (the “awareness” color” for the cause) to heighten awareness of elder abuse. Annually activities and media interest on this day increase incrementally each year.
- After intervention by APS, 82% of the clients who were served showed improved or positive outcome.