

# Swain County Human Services

2012-2013  
Annual Report



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PO Box 610  
Bryson City, NC 28713  
828-488-6921  
[www.swaincountydss.org](http://www.swaincountydss.org)

## **Human Services Board**

Phil Carson, Chairman  
Robert White, Vice-chairman  
David Monteith, Member  
Donnie Dixon, Member  
Steve Moon, Member

Kevin King, Interim Human Services Director

Sheila Sutton, Interim Director

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Swain County Department of Social Services has the responsibility to meet with clients at their point of need to provide preventive, supportive, and restorative services delivered with competence and compassion while striving to strengthen individual and family life, to support independent living, and to improve the quality of human existence, protect vulnerable children, aged, disabled, and less fortunate in our community. These services will enhance skills, knowledge, and encourage self-sufficiency, dignity, and independence. We will work to preserve the honor and privacy of all people and provide programs of human welfare with the goal of improving the quality of life for the citizens of Swain County.

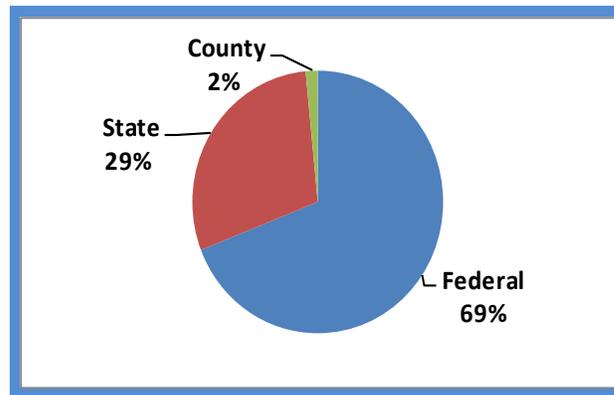
## AGENCY GOALS

- Swain County DSS will run an effective, resourceful, knowledgeable, and ethical organization.
- Children and families at risk of abuse, neglect, and poverty will live in safe, healthy, and stable environments.
- Economically disadvantaged families will become self-determined and not remain dependent on public assistance.
- Families experiencing economic hardship will obtain financial assistance to alleviate their short term crisis...
- Aging and disabled adults will be safe and live in the least restrictive settings.
- Swain DSS will collaborate with sister agencies to ensure services are accessible to all Swain County citizens
- Swain DSS will keep the community informed of all programs and services offered at DSS.

## Support Services

### REVENUES FY 2012-2013

Federal	\$25,053,524.00
State	\$ 8,019,114.00
County	\$ 886,880.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$33,959,518.00</b>



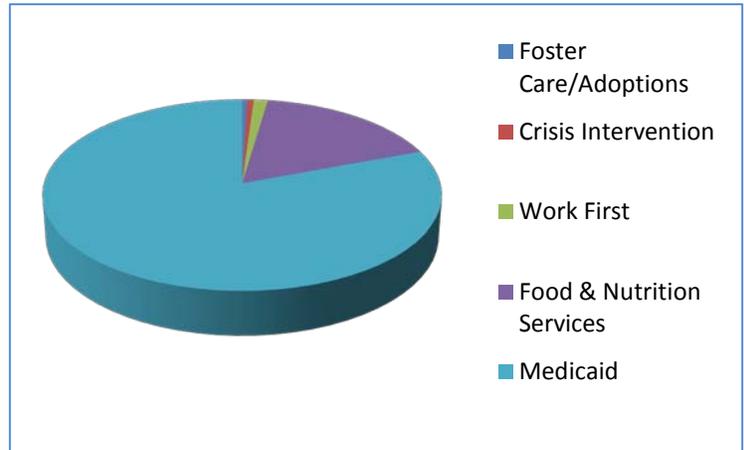
**EXPENDITURES FY 2012-2013**



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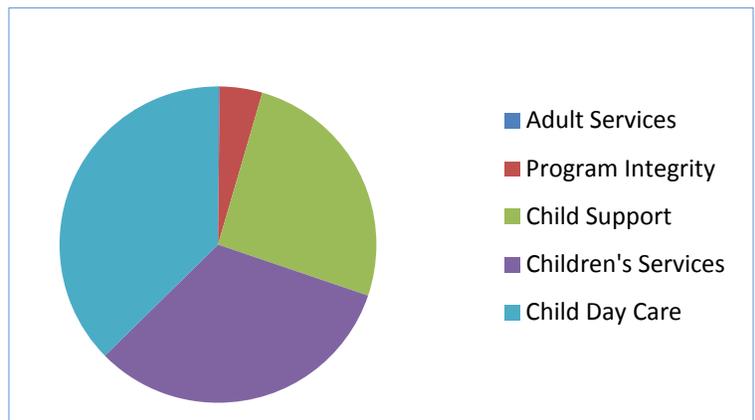
**Public Assistance**

Foster Care/Adoptions	\$688,780.00
Crisis Intervention	\$156,844.00
Work First	\$171,363.00
Food & Nutrition	\$4,343,504.00
Medicaid	\$26,351,881.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$31,712,372.00</b>



**Service Programs**

Program Integrity	\$4,626.00
Adult Services	\$98,232.00
Child Support	\$377,700.00
Children's Services	\$896,015.00
Child Day Care	\$870,573.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,247,146.00</b>



## Service Programs



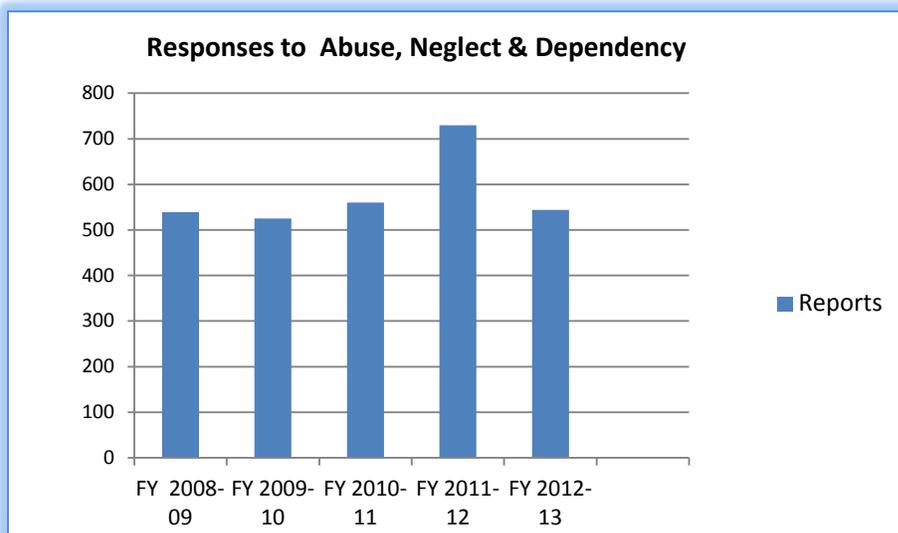
### Child Welfare

#### **Child Protective Services**

This unit consists of four investigative assessors and one intake worker. They investigate reports of suspected child abuse, neglect and/or dependency. Services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you, or someone you know, have reason to believe that a child under the age of 18 is being abused, neglected, or exploited, you are legally obligated to make a report. To make a report during business hours call 488-6921 and ask for the intake worker. If it is afterhours, please call Swain County dispatch at 488-2197.

**544 Reports investigated**

**66 Assists provided to other counties**



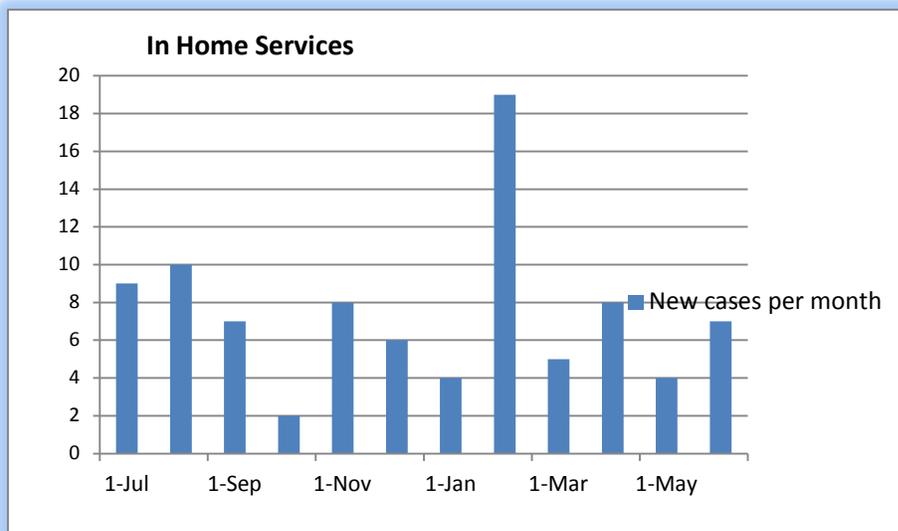
### **In-Home Services**

This unit consists of three in-home service social workers. They provide a continuum of care to families in an effort to protect children when abuse and/or neglect have been substantiated. Social workers connect family members with services designed to eliminate risk factors and promote stability resulting in permanency for children.

**89 Families received In-home services**

**7 Average number of families placed into in-home services monthly**

**43 Monthly average cases**



### **Child Support**

Child Support Enforcement is a state mandated county administered program. Federal law requires that all states establish and collect child support to ensure that both parents support their children.

#### **Services provided:**

- Location of noncustodial parents
- Paternity establishment for children born outside of marriage
- Establishment of support obligations
- Collection and distribution of support
- Enforcement of support obligations

**436**

**On-going cases**

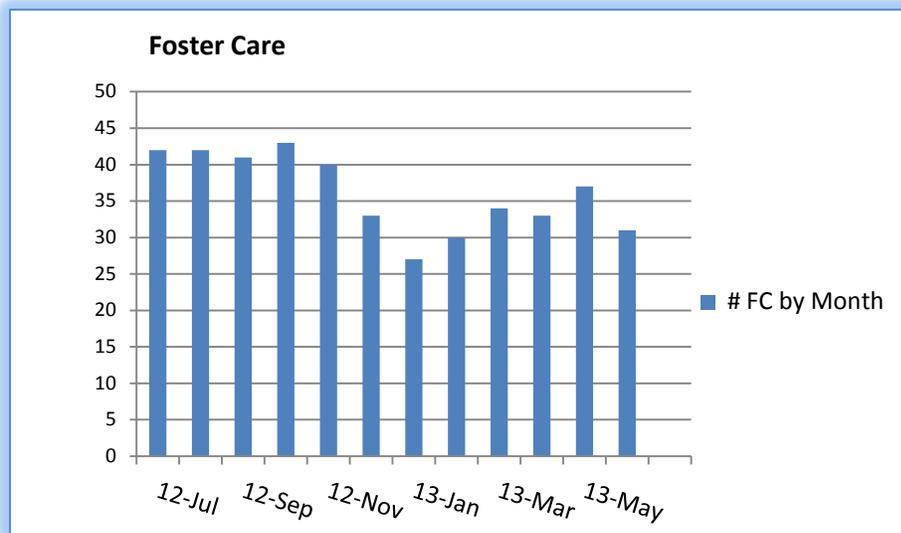
**\$72,252.00**

**Monthly average collections**

## Foster Care Services

Children are placed in the care of the agency via court ordered custody, voluntary placement agreements, or release for adoption. Permanency planning for children ensures a plan of care targeting the most goal oriented and least restrictive environment for children in achieving one year to permanency.

- 37 Monthly average of children in care
- 6 Home studies completed
- 1 Adoption completed
- 26 Children reunified with family



## Adult Services

### Adult Protective Services (APS)

This unit has two adult social workers and they are responsible for all services that involve the protection of adults. These services include: Adult protective services reports, representative payee, guardianship services, in-home special assistance, investigation of complaints on assisted living facilities, 330 Services.

The adult social workers strive every day to ensure that elderly and disabled citizens live healthy, independent and productive lives, free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Protective services provide an immediate comprehensive assessment of abuse, neglect and exploitation reports.

Protective services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you, or someone you know, have reason to believe that an adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, you can make a report during business hours by calling 488-6921 and ask for the intake worker. If it is afterhours, please call Swain County dispatch at 488-2197.

**99 Reports Taken and 29 Outreach visits were conducted**

## **Guardianship Services**

DSS is looked at by the court as a “Disinterested Public Agent”. As a result, the court appoints social services agencies as guardian for elderly or disabled adults who; are mentally incompetent; cannot make responsible decisions concerning their personal care and finances; and, no other family member is available to act on their behalf.

### **13 Guardianship cases**

## **Protective Payee Services**

DSS provides case management for clients who have been deemed unable to manage their own finances. The Court, Social Security or the Veteran’s Administration has the authority to appoint DSS as the Protective Payee.

### **21 Payees for FY 2012-13**

## **ELIGIBILITY PROGRAMS**

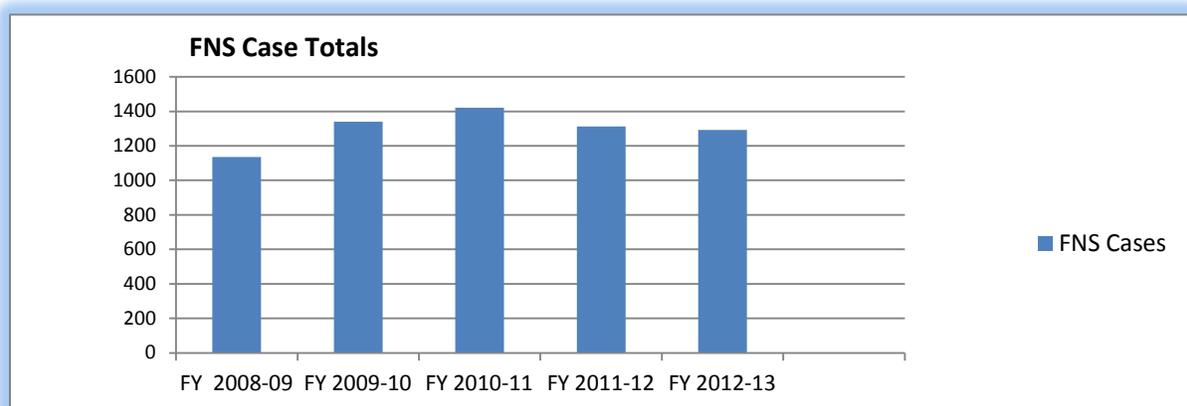
### **FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES**

The Food and Nutrition Services program ensures nutritious meals for low income families by providing a monthly allotment of food stamp benefits. The number of persons in a household and the income and resources of those persons determine eligibility for the program. The food stamps program is a federal entitlement program, so all eligible individuals and households can receive assistance.

**1073 Applications taken**

**1684 FNS Reviews**

**1293 Average monthly caseload**



## **COMMODITY FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM**

This program distributes USDA donated commodity food to low income households on a quarterly basis. Distribution is open to all households receiving Food Stamps. Also, non-Food Stamp households may apply, and if income eligible receive the food. Distribution is held on a quarterly basis and it is first-come, first-serve. This program is also held on the Qualla boundary five days per week (only if not receiving food stamps).

**199 Average families served per quarter**

*\* As of July 1, 2013 Swain County DSS no longer distributes The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). Manna, Inc. has partnered with the Swain County Resource Center to distribute food on a routine basis. For questions or concerns please contact Melissa Barker at 488-7505.*

## **TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)**

### **Work First**

This program enables citizens to become self-sufficient by linking them with resources and teaching those skills that help them succeed. Work First provides short-term financial assistance and support services to help low income families achieve economic independence. This program is based on the premise that parents have a responsibility to support themselves and their children. Related caretakers can apply for monthly cash assistance if they are caring for eligible children in their home. Income and resources are only counted for the child/ren and the relative caretaker must cooperate with Child Support.

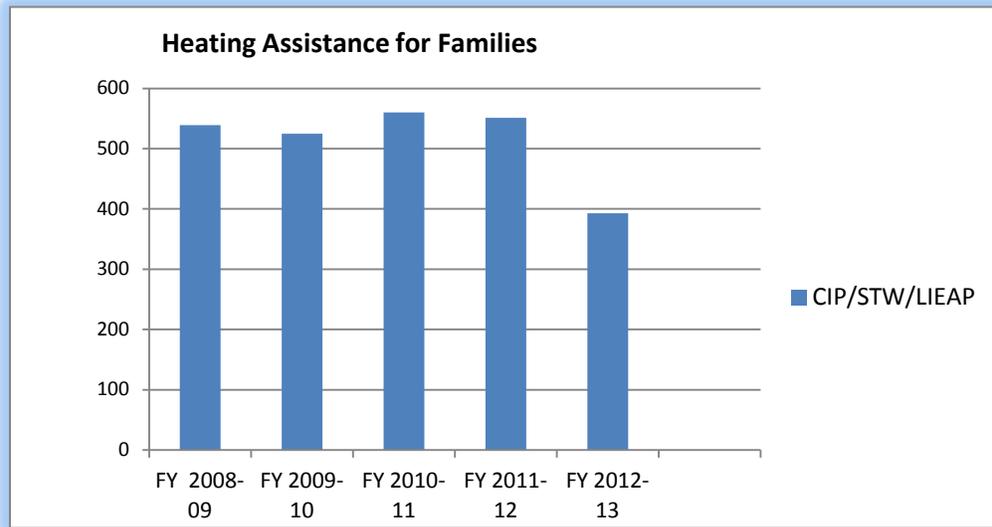
**6 Work First On-Going applications**  
**15 Relative caretaker applications (Child-Only)**

### **Work First Emergency Assistance**

This type of assistance is intended to help clients who find themselves in an immediate financial crisis. The assistance is limited to one time per year and amount in based on need. Income eligibility is based on 100, 150 and 200% of the poverty level depending on the program.

**40 Benefit Diversion applications**  
**(100% poverty level and only one-time within 12 mo. period)**  
**244 Applications taken (150% poverty level)**  
**20 Application taken (200% poverty level)**

## ENERGY ASSISTANCE



### **Crisis Intervention Program (CIP)**

This federally funded program provides assistance to qualified households during extreme heating or cooling emergencies. Payments are made directly to the vendors for households experiencing life-threatening or health related emergencies due to weather conditions.

**105,622.57** Total amount allocated for FY 2012-13

**206** Total number of families served

### **Share the Warmth (STW)**

This is a program for Duke Power customers only. Share the Warmth can cover past due heating bills and other types of heating needs as well.

**1133.26** Total amount allocated for FY 2012-13

**6** Total number of families served

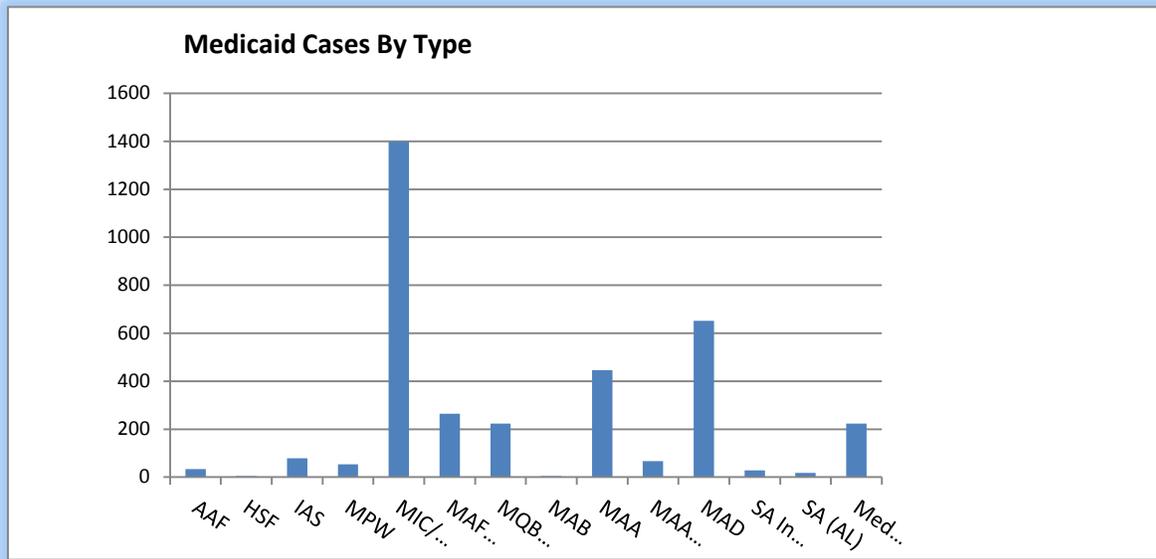
### **LIEAP- Low Income Energy Assistance Program**

This program provides for a one- time cash payment to help eligible families pay their heating bills.

**\$42,600.00** Allocation for FY 2012-13

**181** Applications

## Medicaid



Medicaid benefits and eligibility vary according to a person's circumstances. Medicaid provides assistance with medical expenses for low income families with children, disabled adults and the elderly.

**3,015** Monthly average cases

**1355** Applications received per year

**6198** Reviews and changes made to cases

### **Medicaid Transportation (NEMT)**

Transportation is arranged and provided for individuals who are requesting non-emergency medical transportation. Eligibility is determined based on Medicaid policy.

**301** Monthly average clients transported

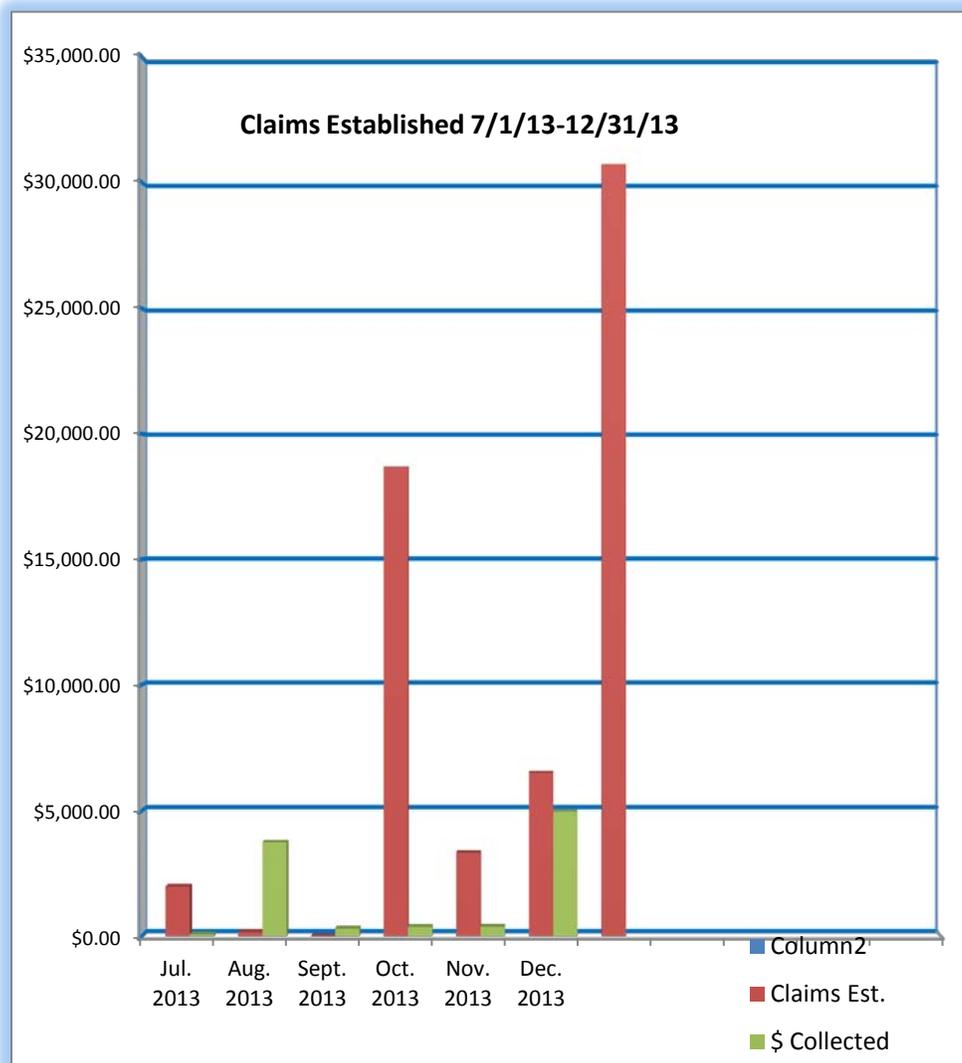
**3237** Trips per year

**\$86,215.28** Total cost for Medicaid trips

## Program Integrity

Much emphasis has been placed on identifying clients who are receiving services fraudulently. Our full-time program integrity worker has devoted her time to investigating reports of welfare fraud. Many referrals come into the agency from concerned citizens and our eligibility caseworkers assist by identifying questionable information and then refer it to our fraud worker. Repayment of benefits is pursued in cases of fraud.

**293**                      **Cases under investigation**  
**\$91,795.50**        **Total claims for FY 2012-13**



**Did you know?**

**Swain DSS has a website located at [www.swaincountync.gov](http://www.swaincountync.gov)**

**You can report welfare fraud by phone or the internet. Call 1 800 662-7030 or 828 488-7856. The web address is:  
[www.welfarefraudreporting@swaindss.org](mailto:www.welfarefraudreporting@swaindss.org)**

**Swain County DSS and Swain County Health Department are now consolidated under the umbrella of Swain County Human Services. The Swain County Commissioners along with an advisory board will make up the Human Services governing board.**

**NC Fast (North Carolina Families Accessing Services Through Technology) is a software tool designed to improve the way the Social Services in our 100 Counties do business. When completely implemented, NCFast will have replaced numerous legacy systems used by County Departments of Social Services with a single uniform method to determine eligibility for families in need of supportive services. NCFast is one of the largest technology projects in the history of Social Services in North Carolina. Productivity is slow now but when this system is fully implemented consumers will provide all their information in one sitting, to one person, telling their story only once.**

**Training in all program areas is high priority for this agency. All social workers are up to date with state required trainings in Children's Services.**

**The North Carolina Social Services Association (NCSSA) has partnered with the "Smoky Mountain Ride In" biker club to raise money each year to buy Christmas presents for all of our foster children. A total of \$ 4,597.20 was raised for the 2013 Christmas season.**

**Swain County DSS has partnered with the Swain County School system, Juvenile Justice, Mental Health Services and the 30<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court District to form an *early intervention truancy program*. It targets truancy issues with children in elementary and middle schools. The focus is on parents who are the primary reason their children are not attending school. Each county will have their own Early Intervention Team. Meetings are held monthly to discuss the referrals and on-going court cases. This is a new initiative with the primary goal of keeping children in school and reducing the drop-out rate.**

**If you are interested in becoming a licensed foster parent and would like to learn more about the process please contact Bree Clawson at 488-6921. Swain DSS would like to keep children in their county of origin to minimize as much as possible, any further disruption in their lives. This is a serious commitment but it can be very rewarding to know that you made a difference in a child's life.**

