Swain County Department of Social Services
2013-2014 Annual Report

*Providing preventive, supportive, and restorative services with competence and compassion.*
Swain County Human Services
2013-2014 Annual Report

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.
Connecting to our Citizens

Customers can come to our office at 80 Academy Street, Bryson City, N.C. Call us at (828) 488-6921, or Visit our webpage at www.swaincountync.gov

We want the customer to have a great experience when they walk through our doors. Each person that is in need can be assessed for all of our programs during the intake process. They only have to tell their story one time, which makes it easier on the customer. For fiscal year 2013-14 the reception staff logged in 15,144 customers for various needs and circumstances averaging 1,262 people a month, issued 15 work permits, issued 200 fishing license waivers, and provided 3,205 Medicaid trips; for non-medical emergency transportation.

Walk-ins

![Graph showing walk-ins over time]
Revenue Totals $34,304,785.96

25,360,963.97 (70%)

7,996,723.48 (27%)

947,098.51 (3%)

Revenue Totals $34,304,785.96

Federal

State

County
EXPENDITURES FY 2013-2014

Public Assistance

- Foster Care/Adoptions: $453,893.09 (1.3%)
- Crisis Intervention: $145,203.98 (0.004%)
- Work First: $96,388.96 (0%)
- Food & Nutrition: $5,137,423.55 (16%)
- Medicaid: $26,213,577.61 (88%)

Total: $32,046,487.19
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Integrity</td>
<td>$24,714.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Services</td>
<td>$243,707.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Support</td>
<td>$143,615.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Services</td>
<td>$900,457.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Day Care</td>
<td>$945,803.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,258,298.77</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
This is where child welfare begins. Law Enforcement, school personnel, medical professionals, and other members of the community make reports of suspected neglect, abuse and/or dependency every day. The CPS unit consists of 4 investigators/assessors and 1 intake worker.

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 dependent, you are legally obligated to make a report. To make a report during business hours, please call (828) 488-6921. If it is after business hours or a weekend or holiday, please call Swain County dispatch at (828) 488-2197 and ask for the on-call social worker.

During FY 2013-2014, 785 reports of child abuse, neglect, or dependency were received by Swain County DSS. Of those 785 reports, 431 were accepted for investigation. 149 of those families lived in Bryson City and its surrounding area, and 282 families lived on the Cherokee Indian Reservation. Swain County also provided 52 assists to other counties.
FAMILY IN-HOME SERVICES

In-Home Services are legally mandated and provided to families who have had a substantiation of abuse, neglect, or dependency or a finding of in need of services due to safety issues. The goals of these services are to maintain the safety of children, to strengthen the family’s capacity to protect and nurture its children, and to preserve or retain children within their own families.

| Total Number of Families Served | 389 |
| Total Number of Children Served | 160 |
| Children Who Remain At Home Or With Kin While Receiving In-Home Services (thus avoiding Foster Care) | 93% |

Did You Know?

Inadequate supervision and injurious environment due to alcohol / drug abuse are the most frequent types of maltreatment of children.

FAMILY IN-HOME SERVICES… allows Social Workers to partner with families to strengthen their ability to safely parent their child in their own home.
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.

- 44 Monthly average of children in care in Swain County.
- 20 Total number of children that achieved permanence through reunification with a parent, guardianship, or adoption.
- Ever thought about being a foster or adoptive parent? Take this quiz at [http://ncswlearn.org/foster](http://ncswlearn.org/foster) or fill out the Foster/Adopt Inquiry and return it to Swain County DSS to find out more information.

Did you know……………

There are essentially three types of foster care placements paid for by Swain County DSS: Family Foster Home, Therapeutic Home, and a Residential Facility. The average cost:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Age Group</th>
<th>Family Foster Home</th>
<th>Therapeutic Home</th>
<th>Residential Facility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 Yrs</td>
<td>$475 month</td>
<td>$1,433 month</td>
<td>$4,279 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 yrs</td>
<td>$581 month</td>
<td>$1,564 month</td>
<td>$4,437 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18yrs</td>
<td>$634 month</td>
<td>$1,638 month</td>
<td>$4,516 month</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Do you know the difference between custody, guardianship and adoption?

- **Custody** is when a person or entity (such as a county department of social services) is responsible for the care and well-being of a child and has the legal authority to consent on behalf of the child, but the child’s parents maintain their parental rights. Custody can be restored to the parents by the court if the parent proves capable of caring for the child.
- **Guardianship** is when a person is responsible for the care and well-being of a child and has the legal authority to consent on behalf of a child. Under a guardianship arrangement the child’s parents maintain their parental rights. However, courts overturn guardianship only if it is determined the guardian is no longer capable of caring for the child or maintaining their safety.
- **Adoption** is the process by which an adult becomes the permanent, legal parent of a child. Adoptions can occur through relinquishments, termination of parental rights, or consent to adoption by a birth parent. Adoption severs the previous legal parent-child relationship and creates a new legal parent-child relationship between the adoptee and adoptive parent. Sometimes children who have been adopted also maintain contact with their birth family. This is called an “open adoption”.
PROTECTING OUR MOST VULNERABLE ADULTS

To make a call of suspected Abuse or Neglect of an elderly or disabled adult, please contact DSS at 828-488-6921 (8:00 am till 5:00 pm) or 828-488-2196 (911) after hours.

Swain County DSS offers programs that provide support and help protect our disabled and aging adults. The adult social workers strive to find resources to enhance independent and safe living, free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Appointments and Walk-in’s are welcome as we meet with adults to determine if their needs can be met by linking adults to resources or assess them for appropriate services. Programs that we administer are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Protective Services (APS)</th>
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<tr>
<td>APS evaluates the report alleging that a disabled or elderly adult has been abused, neglected, or exploited. In order to screen in an APS report the adult is believed to be mentally or physically incapacitated (disabled), and is not able to access essential services or does not have a responsible person who can help with essential services, leaving the adult in need of protection. Through respectful interviewing, including medical record reviews, our goal is to determine if services are needed to protect the adult and prevent further maltreatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14 APS Report: 69 Reports received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Provided Information or Outreach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guardianship</th>
<th>2013-14 Adults in Guardianship: 16</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swain County DSS serves as the “Disinterested Public Agent” which allows our agency to be appointed guardian of adults who have been determined to be incompetent and unable to make decisions on their own behalf. Adults are evaluated annually to ensure their competency is restored if possible, or if a family member has been identified to resume the role of guardian for an adult. The four types of guardian appointments are:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guardian of the Person</td>
<td>Guardian of the Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Guardian</td>
<td>Limited Guardianship</td>
</tr>
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Representative Payee

2013-14 Representative Payee Cases: 23

Swain County DSS serves as Representative payee for adults who receive SSI, Social Security, or Special Assistance In-Home (SA In-Home). The social workers provide case management services to the adult such as budgeting personal spending money, paying their bills, and assessing their needs on a quarterly basis. Representative Payee can be appointed by the Social Security Administration, Court, Veteran’s Administration, or voluntarily requested.

Special Assistance In-Home Program

2013-2014 SA In-Home Program participants: 4

Case Management and coordination of services are provided to Medicaid eligible adults. The goal of this program is to allow adults to stay in a private living arrangement as an alternative to an assisted living placement. There are 10 slots allotted by the state for Swain County to provide SA In-Home. Evaluations are completed by the Adult Social Workers.

Adult Care Home Resident Discharge

2013-2014 Adults assisted: 2

Swain County DSS is the lead agency in assisting residents of Adult Care Homes who have received a discharge notice without a destination for continued care. A team convenes to determine the needs of the adult and assists in locating placement for the adult.

Transition to Community Living

Swain County DSS is responsible for assisting adults currently residing in Adult Care Homes who have been determined appropriate for living within the community, with the location of safe housing, and resources to live independently.

Adult Care Home Facility Licensing and Monitoring Services

Swain County DSS licenses and monitors one Adult Care Home for compliance with state/federal regulations. The agency also investigate complaints of noncompliance in facilities.
Medicaid Caseloads Per year in Swain County

Accessing Medical Care

Medicaid and NC Health Choice programs provide assistance for families with children and individuals who are age 65+, blind or disabled, and meet income and resource requirements.
FACTS ABOUT SWAIN COUNTY FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

2013-2014 YEARLY TOTAL OF APPLICATIONS
1,034

AVERAGE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED PER MONTH
2,851

AVERAGE ACTIVE CASES PER MONTH
1,267

LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES
CHEROKEE COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES (828) 497-2819
GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY (828) 488-1042
MANNA (828) 488-7505
BRYSON CITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (828) 488-2480
LIVING WATERS FOOD PANTRY (916) 868-4373

FACTS: About Food and Nutrition Services:

FACT: The average monthly FNS benefit per person is $133.85, or less than $1.50 per person, per meal. The average FNS household consists of 2.1 people with a gross monthly income of $744.

FACT: The overwhelming majority of FNS recipients who can work do so. Almost 70 percent of FNS recipients are not expected to work, primarily because they are children, elderly, or disabled. In North Carolina, almost 73% of all FNS participants are in families with children. Of households with children, almost 87% worked in the previous or following year of receiving and 60% worked while receiving FNS. This supports the strong correlation between unemployment and food stamps.

FACT: $1 in FNS benefits generates about $1.70 in localized economic activity. Overall FNS pumped about $2.43 billion into North Carolina’s economy in 2012. FNS not only helps low-income people buy groceries, it frees up cash for other expenses, such as medical care, clothing, home repairs and childcare. That benefits local businesses and their employees,
Work First is about helping families achieve self-sufficiency by helping adults support themselves and provide for their children. To help families reach their self-sufficiency goals, Work First provides employment services, other supportive services, and time-limited cash assistance to families with children under age 18. The family is referred to child support to help get additional financial support for the children.

**WFFA EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

$9,852.41 (57) HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

**200% EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

$5,087.11 (21) HOUSEHOLDS SERVED
SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

The Smoky Mountain Ride In supports Christmas for the Foster Children by sponsoring an event in June (for the past 3 years) that raises money from their members and from the community. They partner with the Swain County Chapter of NCSSA to host this event.

The Grove Church has purchased book bags and all recommended school supplies for the Foster Children for the past 6 years.

The Bryson City Methodist Church provides DSS with Emergency Assistance funds called Good Samaritan. This fund is unique to Swain County and is valuable because it helps individuals who do not qualify for programs that assist families and children. The Methodist Church also provides Easter Baskets to the Foster Children each year.

Smoky Mountain Ride-In Present Fundraiser Check to NCSSA

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The American Association of University Women presented the Foster Care Unit with Duffle Bags to help children who have been taken into custody.

“Tribe Called Praise” sponsors a Toy Drive to provide children with gifts for Christmas.

FACES, which is Faith and Community Emergency Services, provides Emergency Assistance to individuals who do not qualify for other state or federal programs. This money comes to DSS from the 4th Sunday Lunch at the Presbyterian Church sponsored by the Gift Fund, as well as special offerings from the Ministerial Association.

Community Ministers provide DSS staff with devotional, words of encouragement, and expressions of appreciation.

The Front Desk and Front Service Staff of Harrah’s Casino provided gifts for the Guardianship Program at Swain DSS.

Thank You So Very Much!
Key Contacts For Swain County Department of Human Services

Interim Human Services Director: Administration Building: 488-9273 Ext. 2231
Kevin King / k_king@swaincountync.gov

Interim Director: Sheila Sutton / sheila.sutton@swaindss.org
Swain County Human Services Building: 488-6921 Ext. 2021

Medicaid/Health Choice Supervisor: Ext. 2043
Sonia Monteith / sonia.monteith@swaindss.org

Children's Services/Intake Supervisor: Ext. 2017
Erin Pooser / erin.pooser@swaindss.org

Foster Care Supervisor: Ext. 2042
Bree Clawson / bree.clawson@swaindss.org

In-home Services Supervisor:
Adult & Community Services Supervisor: Ext. 2012
Carole Maennle / carole.maennle@swaindss.org

Food and Nutrition/Child Support Supervisor: Ext. 2011
Kim Cunningham / kim.cunningham@swaindss.org

Fiscal Officer: Administration Building: 488-9273 Ext. 2241
Lottie Barker / Lottie.barker@swaincountync.gov

Personnel Officer: Administration Building: 488-9273 Ext. 2227
Elise Bryson / ebryson@swaincountync.gov

Computer Technology: Swain County Human Services Building 488-6921 Ext. 2047
Kurt Angel/ kurt.angel@swaincountync.gov

Child Support Enforcement:
(828) 488-2191 / Fax: (828) 488-8658
P.O. Box 2840, Bryson City, NC 28713

Board of Commissioners/Human Services Board:
Phillip Carson, Chair
David Monteith, Vice Chair
Steve Moon
Dr. Ben Bushyhead
Danny Burns