

Rockland County
Department of Social Services
2017 Annual Report



Ed Day
County Executive

Joan M. Silvestri
Commissioner



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Joan M. Silvestri
Commissioner

To: County Executive Ed Day
Members of the Rockland County Legislature

It is with pleasure that I submit the 2017 Annual Report for the Rockland County Department of Social Services.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support this year. Without your help, we would be unable to help the numerous residents who reach out to us daily for assistance. Appreciation also goes out to our staff and community members who continually go above and beyond to help those in need; inside you will find many examples of their care and compassion.

I know that we can count on your support in future years to help us accomplish our goal of assisting our vulnerable neighbors.

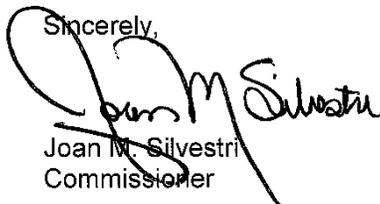
Sincerely,

Joan M. Silvestri
Commissioner

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ROCKLAND COUNTY GOVERNMENT

County Executive:

Hon. Ed Day

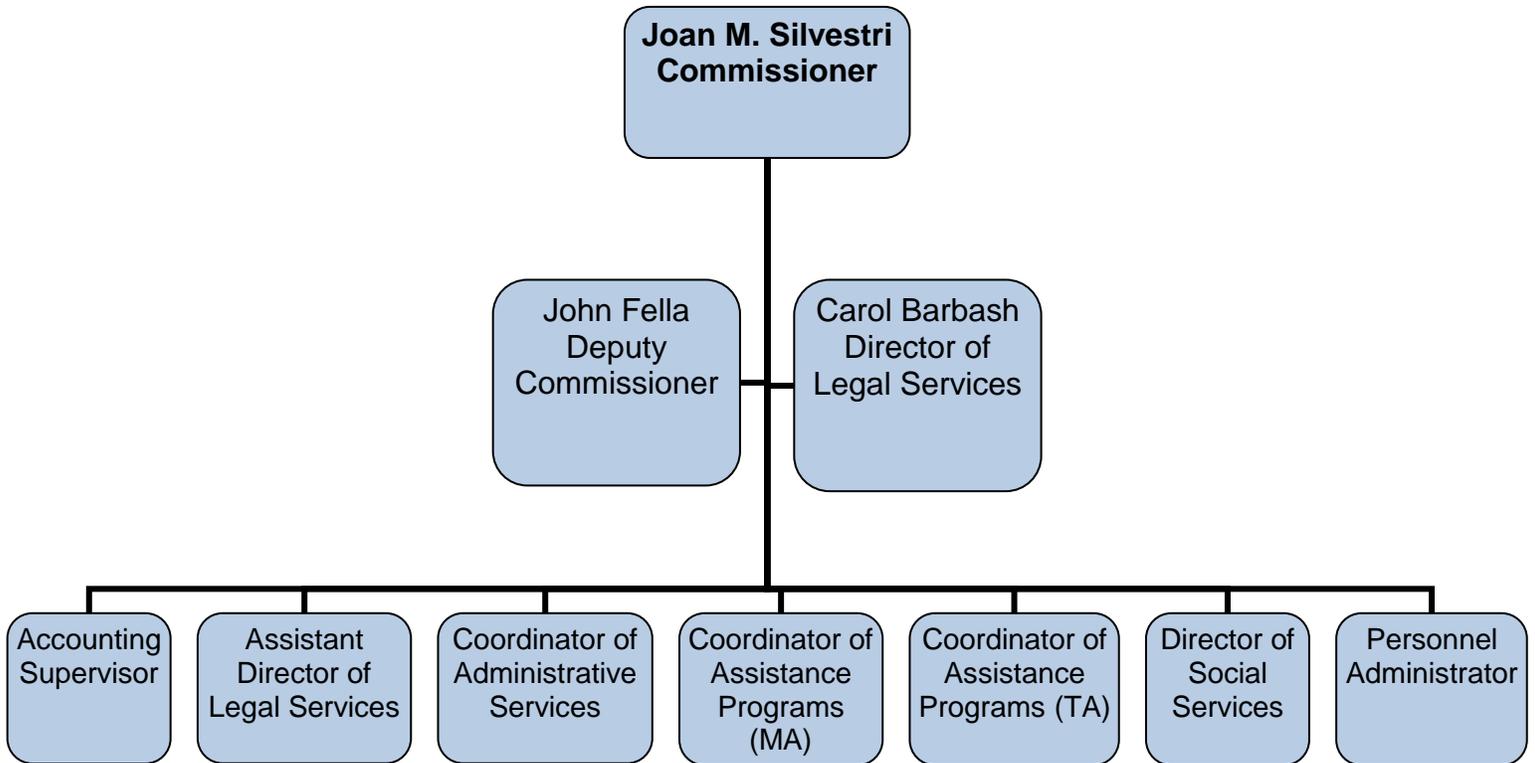
County Legislature:

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Hon. Jay Hood, Jr.
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Rockland County Department of Social Services



AT A GLANCE – INDIVIDUAL, CASELOAD ACTIVITY & MONTHLY AVERAGE COMPARISONS

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE

		2016	2017	% Change
Active Temporary Assistance Cases				
	Family Assistance	481	403	-16.2%
	Safety Net	539	557	3.3%
	Total Active Cases	1,020	960	-5.9%
Temporary Assistance Case Activity				
	Applications Processed	2,604	2,655	1.9%
	Cases Opened	1,583	1,669	5.4%
	Withdrawals	96	94	-2.1%
	Denials	925	892	-3.6%
	Cases Closed	1,252	1,153	-7.9%
	Recertifications	1,870	1,565	-16.3%
	Changes in Active Cases	7,320	6,424	-12.2%
	Total Case Activities	13,046	11,797	-9.5%
Temporary Assistance Recipients				
	Family Assistance	1,079	903	-16.3%
	Safety Net	973	901	-7.4%
	Total Recipients Year End	2,052	1,804	-12.1%

SNAP

		2016	2017	% Change
Active SNAP Cases				
	Non-Public Assistance	14,727	14,399	-2.2%
	Public Assistance	658	626	-4.9%
	Total Active Cases	15,385	15,025	-2.3%
SNAP Case Activity				
	Applications Processed (Non-Public Assistance)	9,369	8,870	-5.3%
	Cases Opened	6,811	6,407	-5.9%
	Withdrawals	367	352	-4.1%
	Denials	2,191	1,811	-17.3%
	Cases Closed	7,590	6,738	-11.2%
	Recertifications	9,319	9,006	-3.3%
	Changes in Active Cases	23,839	22,433	-5.9%
	Total Case Activities	50,117	46,747	-6.7%
SNAP Recipients Year End		44,101	42,499	-3.6%

A decrease in Temporary Assistance and SNAP recipients is due to our successful efforts in assisting 317 clients obtain employment and implementation of a new SNAP program affecting abled-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) which requires that we close cases of healthy adults who do not comply with work searches/preparation.

AT A GLANCE – INDIVIDUAL, CASELOAD ACTIVITY & MONTHLY AVERAGE COMPARISONS

		2016	2017	% Change
MEDICAID	Medicaid Case Activity			
	Applications Processed	6,720	6,674	-0.7
	Cases Opened	4,850	4,273	-11.9
	Withdrawals	315	355	12.7
	Denials	1,555	2,046	31.6
	Cases Closed	12,451	10,132	-18.6
	Recertifications	13,289	5,637	-57.6
	Changes in Active Cases	55,141	25,052	-54.6
	Total Case Activities	87,601	47,495	-45.8
	Medicaid Recipients Year End - Applied through DSS	65,841	33,135	-49.9%
Medicaid Recipients Year End - Applied through New York State of Health (NYSOH)	36,018	74,113	105.8%	
Medicaid Recipients Year End - TOTAL	101,859	107,248	5.3%	

*With the opening of the New York State of Health (NYSOH) on January 1, 2014, all new Medicaid applications for persons who: are younger than 65 years old, do not have Medicare, are not placed permanently in a Nursing Care Facility and are not applying for any of the specialized Medicaid Waiver Programs available to qualified disabled children and adults were processed through the Health Benefit Exchange. All other populations applied through DSS.

The continued decrease in local Medicaid activity is due to the on-going transition of Medicaid recipients to the NYSOH.

EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM

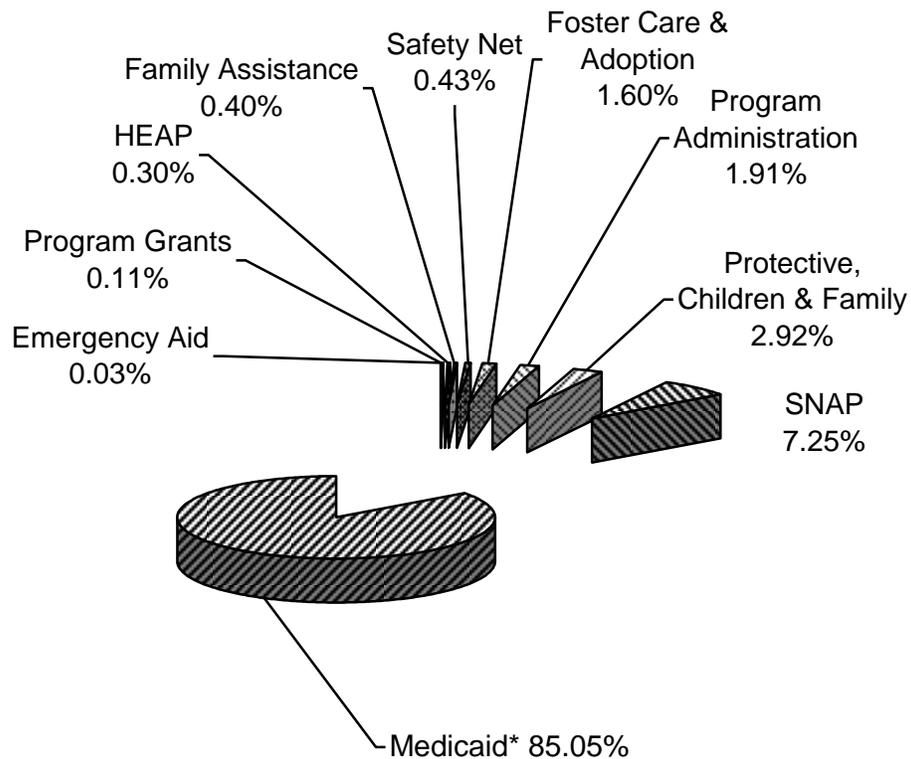
EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM

<u>Program</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Medical Assistance (Medicaid)*	\$812,788,571	\$866,702,414	\$54,003,843	6.64
SNAP**	77,390,050	73,893,907	(3,496,143)	-4.52
Family Assistance	4,453,391	4,075,865	(377,526)	-8.48
Safety Net	4,727,029	4,355,463	(391,566)	-8.28
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)**	3,003,220	3,035,415	32,195	1.07
Emergency Aid	237,401	343,669	106,268	44.76
Protective, Children and Family**	29,266,719	29,770,660	503,941	1.72
Foster Care and Adoption Assistance**	17,675,798	16,297,529	(1,378,269)	-7.80
Program Grants	1,056,687	1,158,226	101,539	9.61
Program Administration	19,648,516	19,475,736	(172,780)	-0.88
	\$970,247,382	\$1,019,178,884	\$48,931,502	5.04

*2016 and 2017 expenditures include expenses for individuals who applied through DSS and NYSOH.

**Includes Program Administration

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM EXPENSES AS A % OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES



*2017 Medicaid expenditures include expenses for individuals who applied through DSS and NYSOH.

MEDICAID EXPENDITURES* BY PROVIDER

<u>Provider Type</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Hospital Inpatient	\$38,621,026	\$41,313,701	\$2,692,675	7.0%
Hospital Outpatient	12,153,590	10,055,755	(2,097,835)	-17.3%
Skilled Nursing Facility	72,234,677	67,392,873	(4,841,804)	-6.7%
Intermediate Care Facility for Developmentally Disabled	24,535,083	8,909,097	(15,625,986)	-63.7%
Clinic	31,310,403	26,156,594	(5,153,809)	-16.5%
Hospice	729,381	414,426	(314,955)	-43.2%
Physicians	2,880,141	3,450,740	570,599	19.8%
Dental	415,492	425,972	10,480	2.5%
Other Practitioners	5,061,183	4,714,849	(346,334)	-6.8%
Child Care Instl Per Diem	516,323	469,201	(47,122)	-9.1%
Personal Care	13,813,758	14,452,338	638,580	4.6%
Home Health Services	486,163	452,682	(33,481)	-6.9%
Assisted Living Program	5,673,731	7,780,021	2,106,290	37.1%
Waived Services	136,018,190	148,850,412	12,832,222	9.4%
Rehab and Therapy	59,397	133,940	74,543	125.5%
Rehab Options Services	22,948,534	21,583,134	(1,365,400)	-5.9%
Drugs and Supplies	11,230,584	11,082,633	(147,951)	-1.3%
Eye Appliance and Durable Medical Equipment	583,738	646,674	62,936	10.8%
Prepaid Care	419,443,072	480,875,810	61,432,738	14.6%
Care Management Plans	7,595,310	8,281,402	686,092	9.0%
Transportation	5,647,005	6,212,155	565,150	10.0%
Lab and X-ray	663,642	788,283	124,641	18.8%
Other**	168,149	2,349,723	2,181,574	1297.4%
Total	\$812,788,571	\$866,792,414	\$54,003,842	6.6%
Administration	8,643,196	6,934,942	(1,714,254)	-19.8%
Medicaid Grand Total	\$821,431,767	\$873,727,356	\$52,295,589	6.4%

*2016 and 2017 expenditures include expenses for individuals who applied through DSS and NYSOH.

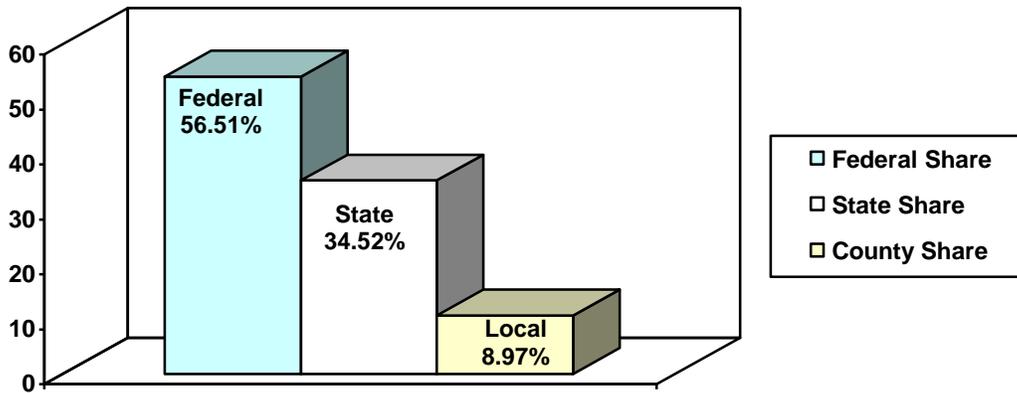
**Implementation of a new rate code defaulted to this category incorrectly resulted in a higher than usual expenditure in 2017. This will be corrected in 2018.

<u>Source</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Local Share	\$63,344,849	\$65,293,683	\$1,948,834	3.1%

REVENUE BY SOURCE **PROGRAM GRANTS**

REVENUE BY SOURCE

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Federal	\$543,845,951	\$575,972,422	5.9%
State	339,924,651	\$351,786,449	3.5%
County	<u>86,476,780</u>	<u>\$91,420,013</u>	<u>5.7%</u>
Totals	\$970,247,382	\$1,019,178,884	5.0%



**PROGRAM GRANTS –
EXPENDED IN 2017**

Behavioral Health	\$39,178
Executive Order 151	\$131,339
Family Day Care Registration (CCR)	\$470,245
PINS Prevention FFFS Plan	\$30,253
Safe Harbor	\$92,406
Summer Youth Employment Program	<u>\$394,808</u>
Total	\$1,158,229

PUBLIC INFORMATION / PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Department of Social Services (DSS) strives to keep Rockland's residents, as well as its recipients and providers, informed of its programs, eligibility requirements and overall changes within the Department. DSS also works hard to solicit feedback from community members about the overall operation of the department and its programs. This flow of information is kept current by:



PUBLIC RELATIONS: *strengthen our relationships with community members as well as the general public.*

In 2017, a **CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL** was re-established by Commissioner Silvestri in Rockland County. The purpose of the Council is to advise the Commissioner regarding existing and emerging needs/issues in the community and to plan for possible programs in services and public assistance to address these needs/issues. The Council is made up of 44 members representing recipients of public assistance, medical assistance, providers of social services, medical services and domiciliary care. There are also members from the public (colleges, hospitals, client advocates and various community organizations). The members of the Citizen's Advisory Council act in an advisory capacity for policy development, program planning and program evaluation. Citizen Advisory Council Meetings are held quarterly to discuss items suggested by both the Commissioner and Council Members.



Commissioner Silvestri and CAC member Martha Robles, Executive Director, Catholic Charities Community Services of Rockland.

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Each year, DSS staff participates in **YOUTHFEST**, an annual event held at Rockland Community College that provides residents with access to the many youth and family services available in Rockland County. Services, such as Medicaid, SNAP and Child Support Subsidies help families live healthier and improved lives. Photo shows Carol Barbash, Director of Legal Services, and Barbara Gavin, Director of Social Services, sitting at DSS's booth.

DSS STAFF INITIATIVES: Throughout the year, DSS staff helped many of our residents by collecting and distributing needed items.



Paralegal Camillia McRae sitting in Building L's lobby spearheaded the **collection of school supplies** from staff. Camillia, as well as other DSS staff members, sat at the table for three days in September and distributed school supplies to consumers who had school-aged children.



Men's and women's coats were collected for residents of the County's Warming Center. The Warming Center is home to homeless men and women during the winter months.



County Executive Ed Day, Commissioner Joan Silvestri and Mr. and Mrs. Claus (DSS staffer Theresa O'Rourke and her husband Tony) at a press conference held at DSS. In addition to the annual Gift Giving Tree, DSS staff **collected numerous boxes of toys** to be distributed during the holidays to needy children. DSS also collaborates with People to People on the Gift Giving Tree, an annual month-long event at the Palisades Mall, where residents can drop off toys for children.

DSS's foster children were the recipients of **60 bicycles** donated by the Chance Cosgrove Foundation during the holidays. DSS collaborated with Modell's Sporting Goods in obtaining bike helmets so the children could ride the bikes safely. A representative from Modell's is pictured with County Executive Day, Commissioner Silvestri and Mr. and Mrs. Claus. Tina Cardoza-Izquierdo, Office for the Aging Director, also received holiday donations for our elderly population.

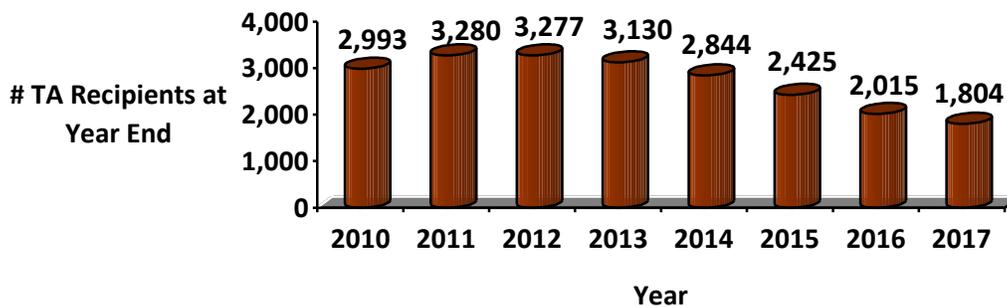


Raising awareness of children and young people living in poverty, Medicaid Supervisor, Erin Smith, purchased red noses for staff in support of **Red Nose Day** (March 24, 2017). Red Nose Day is a campaign dedicated to raising money for children living in poverty by simply having fun and making people laugh.

ADMINISTRATION OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

The Rockland County Department of Social Services administers several State and Federal assistance programs that help low-income individuals and families meet their basic needs. These programs include assistance paying rent, utility bills and childcare, as well as monthly benefits that can be used to purchase food at retail food stores.

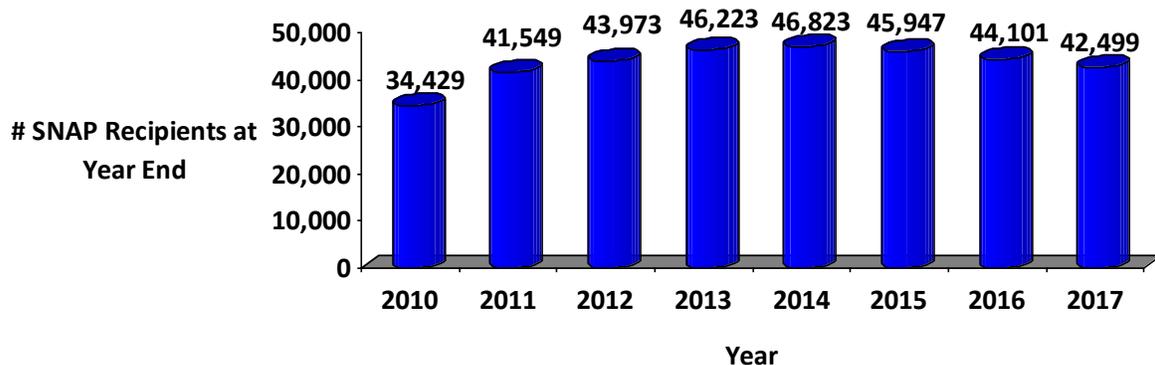
TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE provides temporary support to assist persons who are unable to work or are working in a job paying less than the poverty level. Depending on individual case circumstances, cash benefits are issued under the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the New York State Safety Net Assistance guidelines. The Temporary Assistance Unit also determines eligibility for SNAP for Temporary Assistance applicants and recipients. At the end of 2017, approximately 1,800 individuals were receiving Temporary Assistance.



The **SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)** serves as the first line of defense against hunger and enables families to supplement their food budget.

SSI / SNAP UNIT serves single individuals and childless couples that are receiving Supplemental Security income benefits from the Social Security Administration.

More than 15,000 households (42,499 individuals) were receiving SNAP at year end, with 3,092 individuals/married couples receiving SSI SNAP.



A decrease in Temporary Assistance and SNAP recipients is due to our successful efforts in assisting 317 clients obtain employment and implementation of a new SNAP program affecting abled-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) which requires that we close cases of healthy adults who do not comply with work searches/preparation.

FRONT DESK RECEPTION AND SCREENING serves as the receptionist for all applicants and recipients, as well as most visitors, to Building L. Front Desk staff direct the “traffic” for the entire agency and are well versed

in agency operations, as they direct each inquiry to the proper unit. The Front Desk staff also supports the Screening and Emergency Assistance Unit.

SCREENING AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE UNIT conducts in-depth assessment interviews with all Temporary Assistance applicants. The Unit also handles the cases of applicants that are not receiving Temporary Assistance, but have an urgent need or a situation that requires immediate attention. Situations handled by the Emergency Unit include homelessness, pending evictions, domestic violence, lack of food, and utility shut offs.

EMPLOYMENT UNIT is responsible for assisting applicants for, and recipients of, Temporary Assistance and SNAP enter the workforce and achieve self-sufficiency. Employment services are a critical step for those in poverty to bring about positive changes in their own lives. The Employment Unit successfully assisted 317 residents find employment, an 8.6% increase over 2016 (292). All non-exempt applicants and recipients must participate in work activities assigned by the Employment Unit. These work-related activities are intended to aid individuals and families in poverty and move them toward self-sufficiency.

For Temporary Assistance clients, these activities also count towards the Federal and State “participation rates.” The Federal government has set employment participation rates for all States. These rates mandate that TANF non-exempt adults must be either working or in countable work preparation activities in order for the State to qualify for full TANF funding. Failure by the State to meet these participation rates has serious monetary consequences to the State and local districts. New York State also mandates similar participation rates in the Safety Net Assistance Program.

In order for these work activities to be considered countable towards the participation rate, the participant must be engaged in the activity for a minimum hourly requirement per week (may be up to 40 hours) averaged monthly, depending on the case type.

A partial list of work activities includes, but is not limited to: employment – subsidized and unsubsidized; job search and job readiness training; work experience; on-the-job training; community service and vocational education.

An applicant or recipient may qualify for an exemption from work requirements due to a verifiable physical or mental impairment. Exemptions are based on State and Federal laws. Even with an exemption, applicants or recipients must follow a treatment program that will restore them to employable status.

The Employment Unit is in partnership with the Rockland County Career Center (RCCC) and our Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) community partners. With this collaboration, applicants for/recipients of Temporary Assistance and SNAP will have greater access to programs and training that will help individuals and their families work towards overcoming barriers to employment and help them advance toward self-sufficiency.

HOUSING UNIT provides comprehensive services to families and individuals facing potential homelessness. Experienced Caseworkers in the Unit, as well as support staff and professionals from other agencies, work as a team to address and ultimately eliminate the crisis or urgent circumstances surrounding the individual or family.

Caseworkers attempt to uncover the underlying reasons for the housing problem. As a result, when emergency housing placement is diverted, these cases are retained until issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, lack of employment, mental health, and child care are addressed. Casework counseling and referral to needed services are provided on an on-going basis. Of the 601 families and single adults who were assessed by the Housing Unit, 167 housing placements were made.

A Domestic Violence Liaison is on staff to meet with and assist individuals, families and victims with waivers and to help plan and ensure their safety.

The Housing Unit is notified of all Rockland County Sheriff Office’s 72-hour eviction notices, utility disconnects and residential Health Department violations for the entire County. Staff meets with individuals and family members in an attempt to help them retain safe and affordable housing. In many instances, home visits are conducted to insure the health and safety of frail and elderly adults and minor children. Emphasis is placed on maintaining family stability and in protecting the health and safety of all individuals at risk.

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Housing Unit staff communicates with attorneys, landlords and other nonprofit agencies to help prevent impending evictions. Staff helps negotiate payments of rental arrears, security agreements, rent subsidies, temporary housing alternatives; and secures permanent housing for the homeless.

Rockland County saw the opening of the Warming Center in 2017. Created in response to Governor Andrew Cuomo's Executive Order 32 Code Blue Initiative, the Warming Center protects homeless individuals from inclement weather when temperatures decline to 32 degrees and below by providing a warm, safe place to stay. DSS Housing and Mental Health workers greet Warming Center guests and assist with accessing services. Collaborating with Helping Hands, operator of the Warming Center; Mental Health Association; Department of Mental Health and the Sheriff's Department, DSS Housing staff participate in weekly case management meetings to identify obstacles that could prevent guests from obtaining permanent housing.

Seventy-three unique individuals (56 males/17 females) were housed during the Code Blue season (November – April), and 38 formerly homeless individuals were found permanent housing during the same time period.

DSS employees and local organizations embraced the Warming Center guests:

- ♥ DSS staff collected more than 300 coat, hats, gloves, scarves and boots
- ♥ CSEA and many local organizations donated numerous items, including videos and blankets
- ♥ Several local eateries donated food during the holidays
- ♥ Hudson River Healthcare offered healthcare screenings and medical care to all guests

The Department operates an **Emergency Family Shelter** to provide temporary housing to families who are homeless due to fire, flood, eviction, and other emergencies that require immediate attention. Shelter staff members assist families in locating affordable permanent housing. The average stay in the Shelter was 74 days, a decrease from 2016, where the average length of stay was 77 days. Other services include case management, childcare, and after-school tutorial and recreation programs for the children and educational workshops for the parents. The Shelter includes a Psychiatric Social Worker to work with individuals and families with mental health issues to obtain housing stability, coordinate and monitor their treatment plans and assist in obtaining other needed services.

Thirty-one new families were admitted to the Shelter in 2017; a total of 33 families resided in the Shelter throughout the year.

Year	New Families Admitted In 2017	Adults/Children Residing Throughout 2017	
	Families	Adults	Children
2014	20	23	31
2015	29	36	49
2016	28	31	49
2017	31	44	72

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP) is a Federally-funded energy program that assists low-income individuals and families in meeting their immediate home energy needs. If qualified, HEAP may be able to help if a household's source of heat is: natural gas, propane, oil, electricity, wood/wood pellets, kerosene, coal or corn.

More than \$5.6 million was provided to assist 5,598 eligible residents with their energy bills through HEAP for the 2017 calendar year.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM is funded by the New York State Child Care Block Grant. Child care subsidies are provided to Temporary Assistance and other families whose income falls below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level to enable them to participate in employment and employment activities; and to move working parents to self-sufficiency, support teenage parents trying to finish high school, and families who need assistance to prevent a child's out-of-home placement.

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In 2017, the Unit served a monthly average of 1,124 children from 578 families, giving their parents/caregivers the ability to work and earn income or attend school to obtain a High School Diploma.

At year-end, there was no waiting list for subsidies. The program continues to assist families moving towards self-sufficiency, which has helped to strengthen families within our community.

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MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

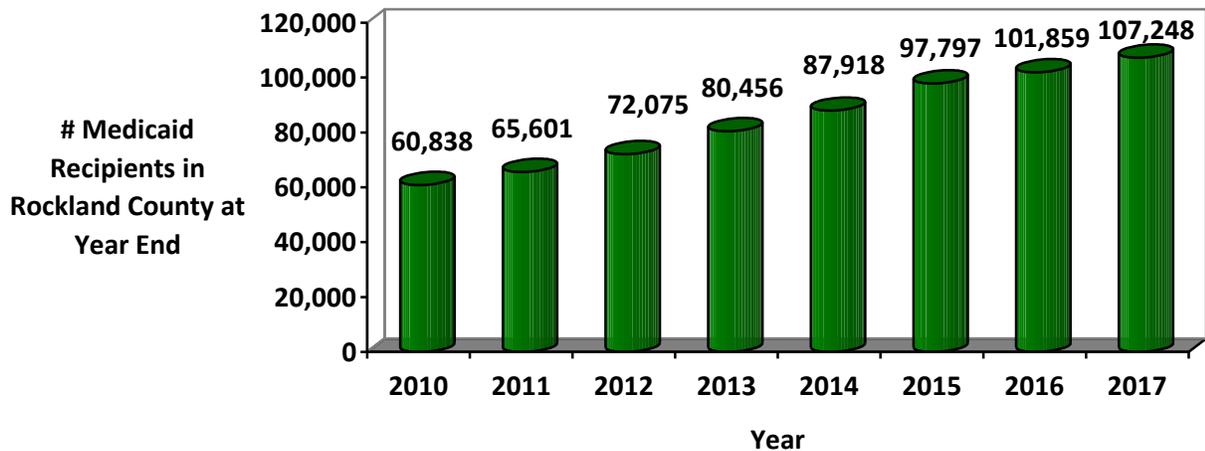
Medicaid provides health care coverage to income-eligible individuals. The program is administered by individual states according to Federal requirements.

The Rockland County Department of Social Services' Medicaid Unit processes Medicaid applications for residents who are:

- Medicare recipients
- 65 years old or older who are not caretakers for children under 21 years of age
- looking for assistance with the cost of Home Care, Assisted Living Facility or Nursing Home Care
- disabled adults and children applying for specialized waiver programs
- disabled adults and children eligible for the Excess Income Program
- eligible for help paying for Medicare premiums and/or copays through the Medicare Savings Program

All other persons looking for medical insurance must apply (including public health insurance programs like Medicaid and Child Health Plus) through the New York State of Health (NYSOH). The Affordable Care Act streamlined the enrollment process for certain individuals/families to gain access to affordable insurance coverage by establishing a Health Benefit Exchange. In October 2013, New York State opened the New York State of Health that enrolls eligible persons into Medicaid, Child Health Plus and Advanced Premium Tax Credit Health Plans with coverage effective January 1, 2014. With the establishment of NYSOH, the Health Benefit Exchange took over all new Medicaid application processing for persons who: are younger than 65 years old, do not have Medicare, are not placed permanently in a Nursing Care Facility and are not applying for any of the specialized Medicaid Waiver Programs available to qualified disabled children and adults. Approximately 80% of Medicaid's caseload falls into this group. Although new applicants went directly to NYSOH, the existing individuals and families meeting the NYSOH criteria remained with the local district until late 2016 when local cases incrementally transitioned to the Health Exchange.

In 2017, approximately 107,000 residents were receiving Medicaid in Rockland County: 33,135 through DSS and 74,113 through the New York State of Health.



SOCIAL SERVICES

The Department of Social Services provides a wide range of supportive programs, including services to strengthen family life, prevent family disruption, promote individual functioning, and keep families together; temporary placement in family foster homes, group homes or residential facilities; adoption; services to help the elderly or disabled remain in their own home; services to unmarried parents; protective services; and services toward self-support.

Children and Family Services

Children and Family Services consists of the following: Investigative, FAR, STEPS, Family Services, and Adolescent/PINS Services. Together, they provide various supportive and important services to help maintain the safety and well-being of children in Rockland County.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS): INVESTIGATIVE AND FAMILY ASSESSMENT RESPONSE (FAR)

CPS is responsible for investigating and/or assessing safety on all reports of suspected child abuse and/or maltreatment of children under the age of 18. Reports of child abuse or neglect are made by calling the New York State Central Registry (SCR) at 1-800-342-3720; these confidential calls may be made anonymously. CPS responds to new reports seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

New York State allows Rockland County to respond to reports to the New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) in one of two ways: a traditional Child Protective Service (CPS) Investigation, or, for certain reports, with a Family Assessment Response (FAR). CPS supervisors are responsible for determining if reports require an Investigation or Family Assessment Response. Decisions are based on State law along with consideration of past history of reports and the level of cooperation from families.

FAR Caseworkers assess for child safety without having to prove or disprove the allegations. Workers engage families to identify their needs and provide supports, services and resources to meet each family's unique circumstances. This partnership connects families to resources within their community or works to strengthen their informal support systems, while reducing risk to the child.

When a child's safety cannot be assessed or a FAR track is deemed not appropriate, a CPS investigation of the allegations is conducted. A CPS Investigative Caseworker may seek the intervention of Family Court for Orders of Protection, court-ordered services for families and/or authorization to place a child in foster care. Criminal action can be concurrent in cases of abuse.



In 2017, the investigative and FAR Units received a total of 1,779 reports from the State Central Register (SCR), an 14% increase from 2016 (1,562). The FAR Unit handled 650 reports while the CPS Investigative Unit investigated 988 reports. FAR accounted for 36.5% of the total reports from the SCR. On average the CPS and FAR Units assessed 148 cases per month.

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Investigative Caseworkers placed a total of 50 children (4% increase from 2016) in care consisting of 29 direct custody, 19 foster care placements with 2 of those placements going from direct custody to foster care placements in the 2017 calendar year.

“STEPS,” (**S**chools, **T**raining, **E**ligibility, **P**ublic Outreach and **S**tatistics) solidifies DSS’s commitment to the safety of children and youth by pulling together DSS units and services to help keep children and youth in Rockland safe.

STEPS staff provide training to school and community organizations so they can identify and report early signs of potential abuse and neglect of children and at-risk behavior of youth. Staff also analyze and interpret data and identify trends in child welfare, sharing this information with the community to streamline and improve the delivery of services. The STEPS Unit is also responsible for determining eligibility of children in care for various Federal, State and local programs. Seventy-two cases were assessed for eligibility in 2017.

In 2016 the STEPS Unit had been assessing requests for Child Welfare Services from both the East Ramapo and Nanuet School Districts. Through public outreach in 2017, the STEPS Unit engaged all seven school districts in Rockland County. As a result, the Unit received a total of 223 direct inquiries pertaining to referrals for family services, Partnership for Safe Youth, family assessments, Child Protective Service’s questions, etc.

STEPS staff participated in 32 community based collaborative meetings. In partnership with DSS’s Adolescent Unit and the Rockland County Probation Department, 12 PINS Orientation presentations were conducted. The STEPS Unit also provided Mandated Reporter training to various community organizations including the Rockland County Department of Health, Daytop Village Inc., New Square Community Improvement Council, Head Start of Rockland, Rockland Opportunity Development Association, Community Outreach Center, Stony Point Conference Center, North Rockland High School, and School District Guidance Counselor staff.

ADOLESCENT SERVICES encompass Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) and Juvenile Delinquency (JD) services as well as the Teen Parenting Unit. The goals of these school-based intervention programs are to prevent foster care and enable adolescents to complete their education and become self-sufficient adults. Teen Parenting staff provides case management services to adolescents in high school up to the age of 21 who are pregnant, parenting and/or at risk for pregnancy.

DSS continues to collaborate with the District Attorney’s Office, Probation, Mental Health, and Rockland BOCES to provide diversion services at the Partnership for Safe Youth (PSY). The Partnership seeks to locate children and youth that are being serviced by multiple systems to provide a streamlined intervention that helps children and youth progress in school and remain healthy and safe in the community.

The Adolescent Team received a total of 115 new referrals.

FAMILY SERVICES staff provides in-home assessment, casework counseling and case management services to Rockland County children and their families without regard to income. The goal of Family Services is to implement a partnership-based practice for service delivery. Partnerships with families promote: participation, cooperation and collaboration between worker and family.

Family Services teams received 215 new cases, a 26% increase over 2016 (170).

DSS continues to collaborate with Bikur Cholim and Rockland Opportunity Development Association (RODA) for the provision of Family Liaison Services. The goals of these partnerships are to build more open, trusting relationships between Ultra-Orthodox/Hasidic families and our child welfare services and to facilitate on-going intervention with at-risk families.

Children and Family Services was again awarded a grant by the Office for Children and Family Services (OCFS) to increase awareness of human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of minors in Rockland County. DSS maintains a partnership with Center for Safety and Change and continues to promote the Safe Harbour Initiative. Outreach is conducted through advertising; distribution of awareness material; and education and trainings in hospitals, school districts and religious organizations. The program has serviced over 60 youth to date and has provided various services, such as educational support, clothing, food, housing, etc. In 2017, four youth successfully participated in a Creative Expressions Group led by Children’s Village. The Safe Harbour

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Partnership hosts monthly Multi-Disciplinary Meetings to discuss cases referred and to coordinate services. There are quarterly Regional Meetings and an annual summit where ideas and information is shared amongst other counties providing these services. DSS Safe Harbour is also represented quarterly at the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force Meeting.

DSS is a key stakeholder in Rockland's Family Treatment Court (FTC) Improvement Initiative, with six DSS families participating. DSS also partnered with the Haverstraw Center to develop and implement the Celebrating Families Program. This successful, evidence-based program addresses the needs of children and parents in families that have serious problems with alcohol and/or drugs. The 16-week curriculum engages all family members to foster the development of health and addiction-free behaviors and family rituals.

The **FOSTER CARE UNIT**, which includes the Home Finding, Therapeutic Foster Boarding Home, Visitation and Transportation and Adoption Units, is responsible for providing safe and loving homes for children who are temporarily removed from their birth families. Foster Care Caseworkers partner with: the children, birth parents, foster parents, direct custodians, school staff, service providers, group homes and residential treatment centers with the goal of family reunification. Services range from placement in a temporary home within the child's community to a facility which provides a higher level of care, including exploring if children are involved in sex trafficking and then referring them to the necessary agencies. Additional services such as obtaining credit reports in their names and independent living skills are provided for youth starting at age 14. Starting from ages 16 to 20, emphasis is placed on reconnecting or connecting youth with adult resources including preparation and building skills for independent living.

In 2017, Rockland County was the only County in New York State to exceed all the National and State averages in Wave 4 Children and Family Services Review. Permanency and Safety measures for the Review included the length of time to permanency for children in foster care, re-entry into foster care after a child was discharged, neglect/abuse of a child in foster care and recurrence of neglect/abuse. Rockland ranked the highest in the State, with the lowest recurrence rate of neglect/abuse.

The Home Finding Unit conducts outreach to identify foster parents, conducts trainings to new foster parents and certifies foster homes. At the end of 2017, there were 52 foster homes in Rockland County, and 60 youth were in foster care placement. The Foster Care Unit continued to concentrate on recruiting foster homes for teenagers in 2017.



Pictures from DSS's Annual Foster Care Picnic.

In 2017, 245 children were serviced. 69 children were either discharged to a parent or relative, adopted, or aged out of care. 1 out of the 69 children re-entered foster care within the year of discharge.

As of December 31, 2017, the Foster Care staff monitored 176 children, 46 children are direct custody, 1 child in a diagnostic placement, 31 in certified foster homes, 3 in Kinship foster care, 1 in a group home, 6 interstate compacts, 7 in pre-adoptive foster homes, 51 children being followed for preventive, 10 children in residential treatment centers, 1 in a residential treatment facility, 3 children under supervision, and 1 child is on trial discharge. Staff provided two Independent Living Workshops which encouraged youth participation in financial planning and homemaking activities.

The **Therapeutic Foster Boarding Home Unit** continued its recruitment in seeking foster homes throughout Rockland County by visiting religious organizations, participating in Wendy's Adoption events and Youthfest at Rockland Community College. This Unit works in conjunction with the Foster Care and Home Finding Units to prevent multiple placements of children. Foster families are trained to provide therapeutic services to children with a higher level of need so they can remain within the community in a family setting. In addition to providing additional supports to families, Caseworkers on the Therapeutic Team are also trained to work with children in facilities and/or hospitals and assist them in stepping down to a less restrictive placement, such as therapeutic foster homes and/or foster homes.

In 2017, there were 10 children placed in a diagnostic center, 25 children were provided respite services at Children's Village Sanctuary, and 6 children received sexual abuse services.

The **Adoption Unit** is dedicated to obtaining permanency for those children who could not be reunited with their birth families. Children are adopted by family members and/or foster parents. Adoptions are finalized through Family Court.

Six children (2 African-American, 2 Hispanic and 2 white) were adopted in 2017.

The **Visitation and Transportation Unit's** role in reunification is to provide transportation and assist with the visitation process between children and their biological family. Visits are provided in a safe and comfortable environment at the Department of Social Services. Partnered with Mental Health Association's Visitation Program, staff assists families involved in Family Treatment Court by monitoring visits in the community and/or the family's homes. Visits are supervised and/or coached. Both types of visits help to maintain and develop bonding while practicing parenting skills.

In 2017, the Visitation Unit provided coaching to 12 families. Coached Visitation identifies the parent as the expert of their child and helps parents to develop a partnership with the coach to be better able and prepared to meet their child's needs. Families are assessed for coaching; various skills are addressed, from diapering and feeding, to behaviors and joint parenting.

In addition, the Parent Center for Visitation provides foster care children and their families with vital and important services, including transportation, drug screening tests, visitation etc. The chart below is a summary of services provided during 2017.

	Car Usage	Drug Tests**	Swabs	Urines	Visits	Transports	Visitors	Bus Tickets	Coached
Total	4,661	4,227	1,171	2,978	1,367	2,144	3,441	3,986	12 families

** Includes both swabs and urines.

Adult & Special Services

PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR ADULTS (PSA) is a program to assist adults, age 18 or over, who because of mental or physical impairment cannot provide for their basic needs or protect themselves from abuse and/or neglect. These services are provided without regard to income and are based on the principle of the individual's right to self-determination and the least restrictive alternatives. PSA referrals continue to increase; in 2017, PSA received 714 referrals, a 55% increase over 2016 (460).

In 2017 there continues to be legislative action to assist the homeless in inclement weather conditions. PSA continues its aggressive outreach during these times by visiting locations where the homeless are known to dwell, distributing flyers in English, Spanish, and French/Creole on how to locate appropriate shelter and services.

Commissioner Silvestri reading our County Executive's Proclamation declaring May as Adult Abuse and Awareness Month in Rockland. Deputy Commissioner John Fella and Caseworkers, Lori Gifford and Alyssa Mills, look on.



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PSA continues to work with the County's Health Department, law enforcement and with the individual in identifying ways to meet health and safety standards for residences. In 2017, 118 cases were referred regarding Hoarding or Environmental Hazards. PSA also assist individuals in maintaining the progress they made in addressing these environmental issues.

Finding affordable housing in Rockland County is a daunting task for anyone; however, when the individual has a special need or mental health issue, it can be even more overwhelming. Family-Type Homes provide a much-needed housing option to the community by offering care for individuals who do not require medical or skilled nursing services, but are unable to cope with everyday routines.

A Family-Type Home provides basic services such as meals, laundry, housekeeping, personal care and supervision in a homelike atmosphere. The "home" can be an apartment or part of a two-family house. PSA continues to work with mental health housing providers to provide training and support to manage a varied younger population.

Adult Financial Management Services are available for adults who are not able to manage their finances, ensuring the proper use of an individual's income and resources and preventing the mismanagement and financial exploitation of those funds by others. In 2017, the Unit handled 34 cases involving financial management.

Protective Services for Adults continues to be involved with Rockland County's Finance Department regarding Tax Foreclosure Properties. In 2017 there were 38 cases in which workers assisted residents by providing them with information on services such as refinancing and payment plans which could prevent foreclosure. Of the 38 cases, seven are still pending; one went to foreclosure.

A major role of PSA is to identify and address circumstances of Adult Abuse. In 2017, 213 cases involved a component of possible abuse. Staff work closely with law enforcement and the legal system in this area to protect vulnerable adults as adult abuse is considered a hidden problem. Workers continually conduct outreach efforts to service providers, banking institutions and the public to better inform them as to where and how to report potential abuse. In 2017, because of outreach efforts, new tracking criteria and a direct telephone line to make referrals, PSA received an increase of 90 referrals over 2016 (123 vs. 213).

Due to the Medicaid Redesign Initiative, Personal Care cases continue to transition to Managed Care Companies where Medicaid recipient's long-term care needs are met. Despite this transition, however, our County still maintains a caseload of over 400. This substantial caseload is as a result of New York State Department of Health's policy and protocol changes pertaining to the provision of Level I Personal Care Services of 8 hours or less, which are the responsibility of the County.

In addition, when a client claims, and their physician agrees, that Personal Care Services are an immediate need and the Managed Care Company cannot or has a delay in registering the client, these cases also become the responsibility of our agency. Staff must conduct an assessment and develop a plan of care.

Adult Services workers continue to act as a resource to applicants and recipients of Personal Care Services to resolve problems and issues of care. The overall purpose is to enable people to remain in their home and in a least restricted environment.

Our agency continues to see increases in waiver programs such as the Care at Home Program, which is designed to allow disabled children to remain and receive care at home, as well as the Nursing Home Transition Program which enables adults who need nursing home services to remain at home.

ENFORCEMENT

The Enforcement Unit represents the Department in Family Court; advises the Commissioner and staff on legal matters, procedures and issues and is responsible for program integrity and child support enforcement.

THE FAMILY LAW DIVISION is responsible for representing the Department in Family Court on matters of paternity, support, child abuse and neglect, foster care, severance of 522parental rights, persons in need of supervision (PINS) and juvenile delinquency (JD) cases.

This Unit has a 90% success rate in abuse and neglect proceedings.

The **LEGAL DEPARTMENT** is responsible for any and all litigation by or against the Department, Article 78 Proceedings, Article 81 Proceedings, and administrative hearings. The Department provides general legal advice to all other units.

A subdivision of the Legal Department is the Fair Hearings Unit that represents the Department in administrative reviews requested by applicants or recipients of assistance who are not satisfied with the agency's actions. This Unit tries to resolve disagreements to avoid a hearing, helping reduce administrative costs, and providing better and improved service to the Department's customers.

The Department of Social Services participated in the resolution of 464 Fair Hearings, of which 92% resulted in Agency affirmed, applicant recinded, applicant default or correct when made.

The Legal Department also oversees the operations and functions of units that enforce Federal, State, and local laws, rules and regulations and procedures regarding assistance payments made through the Department, with the exception of Child Support. The enforcement units under the direction of this office are Special Investigations and Resource Recovery, including the Cash Management System.

The **SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT (SIU)** is comprised of the Fraud and Front End Detection System (FEDS) Sections.

Through both Front (FEDS) and back end (Fraud) investigations, the SIU works to ensure program integrity for all public assistance programs administered by DSS. These programs include Temporary Cash Assistance (commonly known as "welfare"), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits (formerly known as "Food Stamps"), Child Care Subsidy (Day Care) Assistance, Medicaid Assistance, Home Energy Assistance (HEAP) and Emergency Temporary Assistance.

The goal of the FEDS program is to identify at application, *before any assistance benefits have been expended*, unresolved discrepancies which may be indicative of false information. These discrepancies are New York State approved indicators or "red flags" (examples: paid expenses exceed reported income without reasonable explanation; working off the books either presently or previously; self-employed but without adequate business records to substantiate reported information).

The SIU would prefer to receive FEDS referrals, as avoiding expending benefits on behalf of an ineligible applicant at intake is preferable to the time and labor-intensive back end Fraud eligibility investigations. After a substantial decrease in new FEDS referrals received between 2015 and 2016, referrals have leveled off in 2017 (219 received in 2016 to 222 received in 2017). Ninety-four (94) applications were denied as the direct result of FEDS investigations resulting in an estimated \$589,974 in New York State defined cost-avoidance.

New Fraud (back end) referrals increased from 497 in 2016 to 600 in 2017. Sixty-two (62) new Fraud overpayments were identified with overpayments totaling \$417,990 and on-going recoveries totaling \$409,345. Additionally, one hundred (100) active assistance cases were closed as the direct result of Fraud investigations resulting in an additional \$371,856 in estimated cost-avoidance.

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Overall, in 2017 the SIU (FEDS/Fraud) opened 822 new eligibility investigations (a 15% increase over 2016) and completed 748 investigations, with the remainder on-going.

SIU investigators regularly conduct field investigations involving applicants, Child Care Subsidy providers, and relevant and related collateral contacts. These include unannounced home visits to verify an applicant's/recipient's reported household composition and income and unannounced visits to employers to verify Child Care Subsidy applicant's/recipient's reported days and hours of employment. For Child Care Subsidy providers (Day Care providers) staff conducts unannounced attendance verification visits. Information observed by SIU staff during their field investigations has resulted in referrals to the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) regarding issues with licensed Day Care providers; the Rockland County Health Department/Housing Codes Initiative/various Village and Town Building and Fire Inspectors regarding apparent substandard, illegally converted, and/or overcrowding; and DSS Family Services Teams and Child Protective Services regarding possible child neglect.

The SIU refers cases of suspected fraud to the Rockland County District Attorney's Office, and allegations of fraud involving Rockland County Medicaid eExchange clients have been referred directly to the Office of the Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG) for appropriate action.

The **RESOURCE RECOVERY UNIT** assures that any non-exempt income and/or assets of a customer are utilized to reduce the need for assistance. Recoupment is made from recipients when assets or resources are later uncovered such as stocks, bonds, bank accounts, real property, law suit recoveries, estate or other claims. The Unit also files liens, judgments, assignments, estate claims and mortgages in appropriate cases to preserve the rights of the Department. In 2017, \$355,118 was collected by the Resource Recovery Team; 817 new claims were established on behalf of TA, SNAP, HEAP, SIU and O&R reconciliation; and 216 judgments were prepared and filed electronically with the Rockland County Clerk on delinquent consumers. In addition, 85 burial arrangements were coordinated with local funeral homes and cemeteries.

The Cash Management Systems (CAMS) staff members are responsible for coordinating and overseeing all aspects of overpayment and advance payment collections for all programs, including Temporary Assistance, SNAP, Childcare Assistance and Medicaid. These employees serve as a liaison between Rockland County DSS and the consumers who owe the County money. They are responsible for following up on all repayment agreements, establishing contact with non-paying consumers, negotiating a mutually acceptable repayment arrangement, and as a last resort, referring matters for litigation when deemed necessary.

The Rockland County **CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT UNIT (CSEU)** continues to work with Temporary Assistance consumers, Medicaid recipients and private clients to assist them in the establishment of paternity and enforcement of child support orders.

In 2017, \$28.4 million in child support was collected and distributed to custodial parents on behalf of 6,768 children.

**WELFARE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (WMS)
BENEFITS ISSUANCE CONTROL SYSTEM (BICS)
CENTRAL INDEX (CI)**

The Welfare Management Systems (WMS) Unit manages local technology resources to ensure DSS employees have reliable and consistent access to New York State applications that administer social service programs. These applications directly enable DSS employees to strengthen communities by serving Rockland's vulnerable individuals and families.

WMS resolved over 2,500 requests for employee technical assistance, as reported by the WMS online helpdesk system launched in October 2016.

WMS coordinated application review workshops to improve employee State Systems knowledge and caseload management.

WMS assigned full time staff to provide on-site support at all DSS locations, improving technical response time and increasing client-facing time for employees. On-site support also affords WMS the opportunity to observe and better understand workflows of staff as they manage their critical caseloads and help identify opportunities to automate and streamline their work. WMS staff continue to gain valuable insight and knowledge on how frontline Services staff utilize the protective and preventive programs they are mandated to comply with and in turn help ensure the health and safety of the County's most vulnerable residents.

WMS oversees local operations for the Benefits Issuance Control System (BICS), a New York State fiscal accounting system that generates all payments authorized by agency staff.

WMS oversees all operations for the Central Index System and assigned case numbers for approximately 3,800 new cases in 2017.

WMS implements statewide technology modernization efforts designed to reduce agency costs and improve worker productivity. Rockland was among the first counties to participate in the State's Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) initiative. During 2017, WMS configured all DSS employees with VDI. DSS is prepared to implement the final phase in 2018, which will replace hundreds of aging computer workstations with VDI zero client and VDI thin client. WMS actively participated in the State System decommissioning survey and long-term planning for a controlled retirement of the legacy system. WMS also launched the Microsoft Office 2016 upgrade.

WMS extracts statistical data from State Systems to identify patterns in benefits usage to help administrators plan and forecast potential staffing.

WMS protects client information through strict adherence to all State and Federal account control guidelines through compliance with SOLQ and UIB regulations.

WMS staff supports all technical resources that DSS workers use daily to assist County residents. Staff also provides statistical data extracted from various sources within OTDA, OCFS and DOH. This data identifies patterns of use and need, while supporting daily operations and supervisory functions. The data is used to refine planning and policy formulation for enhancement of services provided to County residents.

FISCAL OPERATIONS

Accounting is responsible for the fiscal operations of the agency and preparing and filing all pertinent reports and claims for reimbursement as required by the State and Federal government. The Accounting Department consists of four units: Public Assistance Accounting, Services Accounting, Audit and Administrative Accounting.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ACCOUNTING staff is responsible for processing all benefit payments made to or for recipients of assistance, which includes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Safety Net, Emergency Assistance for Adults, and Emergency Assistance for Families as well as SNAP and HEAP.

The primary function of the **SERVICES ACCOUNTING** staff includes the processing of payments for the following: Childcare, Foster Care, Children's Services, and Protective Services for Adults.

The **AUDIT** staff performs reviews of childcare providers' billing records as well as various applications for medical and public assistance.

The **ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNTING** staff is responsible for the preparation of the department budget, as well as monitoring expenditures and ensuring proper reimbursement from Federal and State sources. Other responsibilities include auditing and paying administrative vouchers, accounts payable, cash receipts, trust accounts, bank deposits and bank reconciliations. This Unit also receives and disburses income for individuals for whom DSS is the representative payee or guardian.

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ADMINISTRATION

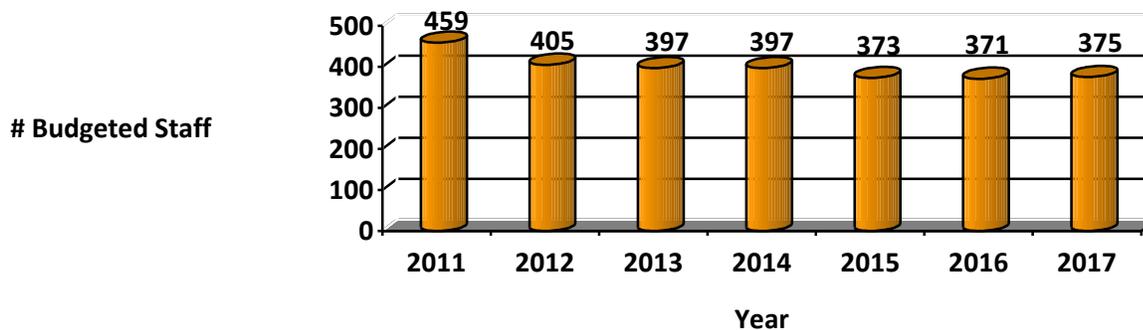
The Department of Social Services has several units that provide administrative, fiscal and support services to the Agency.

OPERATIONS, ANALYSIS AND PLANNING (OAP). The OAP Unit develops and processes funding applications, contracts, plans and grants in accordance with State and Federal regulations and administrative directives. The Unit's processing also incorporates a legal review and analysis. OAP staff develops, drafts, implements, manages, and monitors internal and contracted local programs that provide needed services to families in Rockland communities. The Planning Unit assists contract agencies with contract compliance, performance and reporting requirements to ensure that the Department's expectations and objectives are properly met. The Unit continues its efforts to assure accountability by service providers, including strict scrutiny, monitoring and legal review of contract services. OAP works collaboratively with DSS staff and agencies to identify unmet needs and develop contracted programs that best address what is needed for our clients, families and the community. OAP oversees agency allocations and expenditures, maximizes resources, and develops Annual Agency Achievements and Strategies for submission to the County Executive as well as various mandated State plans, including the County's Child and Family Services Plan, and annual updates required by the State.

The **PERSONNEL OFFICE** serves the Department of Social Services by focusing efforts on the Department's employees. The Personnel Office does this through hiring and retention of a diverse, qualified workforce. The Office provides human resource direction and assistance, training and development, payroll administration, equal employment opportunities and employee relation services to the Department.

Staff is responsible for providing delivery of a human resources program to and for the Department's units and staff. DSS currently consists of 348 employees in forty-one units. In 2017, the office scheduled 127 interviews for 11 different position titles. Eighteen new hires were processed as well as 32 separations. Other functions currently being provided are employee selection, maintaining personnel records, equal opportunity employment, compliance with American for Disabilities Act, exit interviews, benefit administration and payroll administration.

In 2017, the number of budgeted staff was 375.



The **STAFF DEVELOPMENT UNIT** coordinated a wide range of professional development opportunities for staff, managing all logistics related to training for DSS staff. The team worked closely with internal units to implement needed training, providing support for increasing mandates from the State. Staff Development was instrumental in the delivery of an updated EEO Policy refresher training for employees. Various special day-long courses were hosted to assist with specific needs that were identified in the employee engagement survey, including time management and assertive communication. The team also saw the expanded use of distance learning among staff, which brings computer-based training on site to workers at their respective stations and significantly reduces travel and time away from the workplace. This serves to continually enhance staff members' knowledge and skills in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

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Staff Development facilitated 608 workshops, seminars and conferences, totaling 6,150 hours (more than double 2016's hours) of staff training in key areas of professional development. In December, the Department held an Americans with Disabilities Act Policy Training that applies to benefit applicants and recipients. One hundred forty employees in eligibility units attended the training.

ADMINISTRATIVE/OFFICE SERVICES is responsible for maintaining support services for staff located in three different locations. This continues to include forecasting and requisitioning supplies, processing receipts of outside deliveries and operating a secure stockroom. Over the last few years, focus was placed on creating an efficient and reliable system to distribute office supplies through hand delivery. This replaced workers' loss of valuable work time tracking down office supplies when needed. Staff also monitors vehicle mileage and allocates vehicles for staff to perform official duties. Staff continues to monitor the DSS postal account in monthly coordination with ITS. Fund balance limits were created making replenishing more automatic.

DSS SPOT AWARDS enable supervisors to award recognition to a staff member/s to recognize their accomplishments and efforts towards achieving the department goal. The following are a few of the Spot Awards presented in 2017 to staff members who have gone above and beyond:

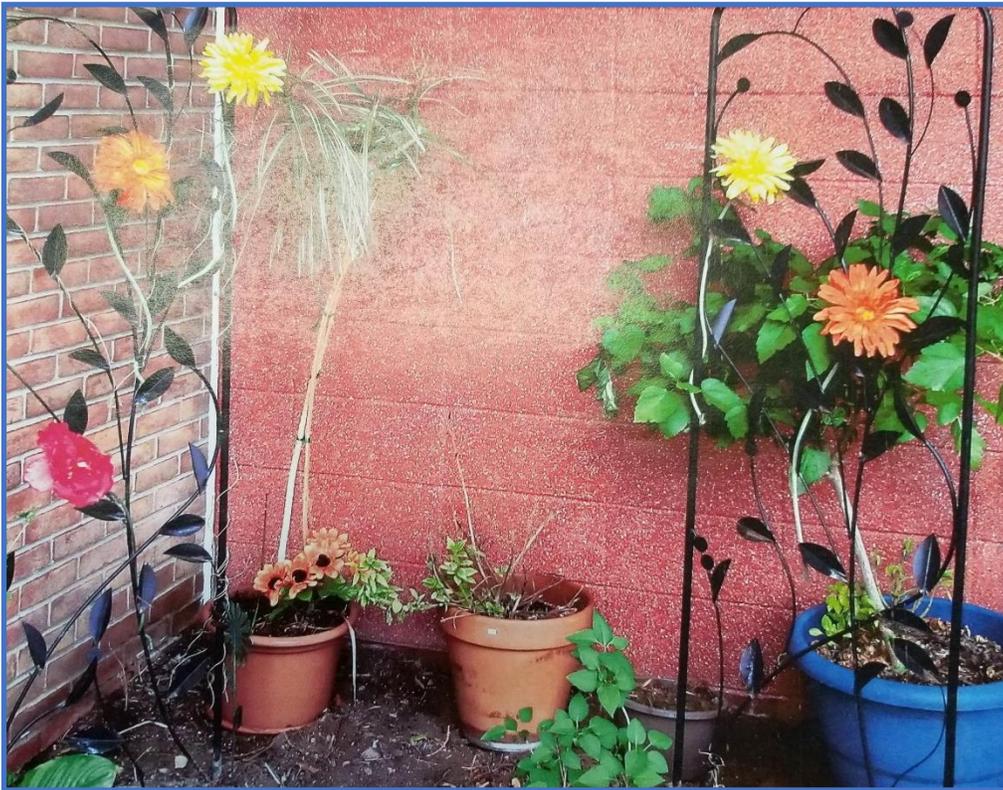
*A client entered Building L for a pre-screening Domestic Violence interview. During the interview, concern arose regarding the client's wellbeing. **Bryan Messinger** contacted the Sheriff's Office and **Maria Pastorelli** and **Valerie Taylor** remained with the client, engaging her in conversation and helping her feel safe until the ambulance arrived.*

*A single mom working full time and raising two children suddenly found herself homeless. **Tony Petriccione** and the **DSS Housing Unit** helped her get back on her feet. She wrote a very gracious letter thanking them for their kindness and compassion.*

*When the Medicaid Unit was short staff due to staff vacations, **Jocelyn Zucco** took it upon herself to check in Medicaid recertifications and hand out work to keep the recert team from falling behind.*

***Shirley Lee** took it upon herself to engage staff from the Emergency Family Shelter to allow children living in the Shelter to participate in a gardening project outside Building C. The children spoke about the project for days, and parents were very happy their children got to be part of the project.*

***Theresa O'Rourke** became involved with an individual facing foreclosure. Through meeting with the resident, Theresa discovered the resident needed assistance with many issues. Theresa provided counseling, encouragement and information to resources and averted the possibility of the family losing their home.*



Garden planted outside of Building C with the help of children residing in the Emergency Family Shelter. DSS employee, Shirley Lee, invited the children to participate. With lots of smiles and hard work, Shirley and the children turned the entryway into a garden, welcoming visitors to the building.