

Rockland County Department of Social Services 2018 Annual Report



Edwin J. Day
County Executive



Joan M. Silvestri
Commissioner





DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Joan M. Silvestri
Commissioner

To: County Executive Edwin J. Day
Members of the Rockland County Legislature

I am pleased to present the Department of Social Services Annual Report which describes our programs and services and highlights our accomplishments during 2018. DSS's partnership with all sectors of our community remains a priority. We continue to collaborate with not-for-profit, educational, law enforcement, judicial and health and human services agencies throughout Rockland County.

At DSS our greatest resource is our DSS staff, almost 400 trained, motivated and professional employees. Throughout 2018, DSS staff in all program areas received many compliments for their dedication and service to our neighbors in Rockland County. We've shared some of these compliments in the Public Relations section. I think you'll agree that Rockland's entire DSS staff is second to none when it comes to customer service.

I would like to thank you for your support this year. With your continued support we will accomplish our goals and vision, where Rockland County communities enjoy an environment where individuals and families thrive, are safe, and have financial security.

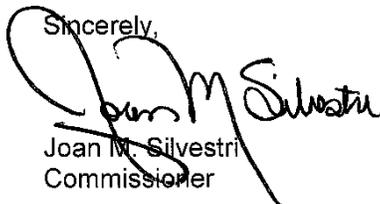
Sincerely,

Joan M. Silvestri
Commissioner

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ROCKLAND COUNTY GOVERNMENT

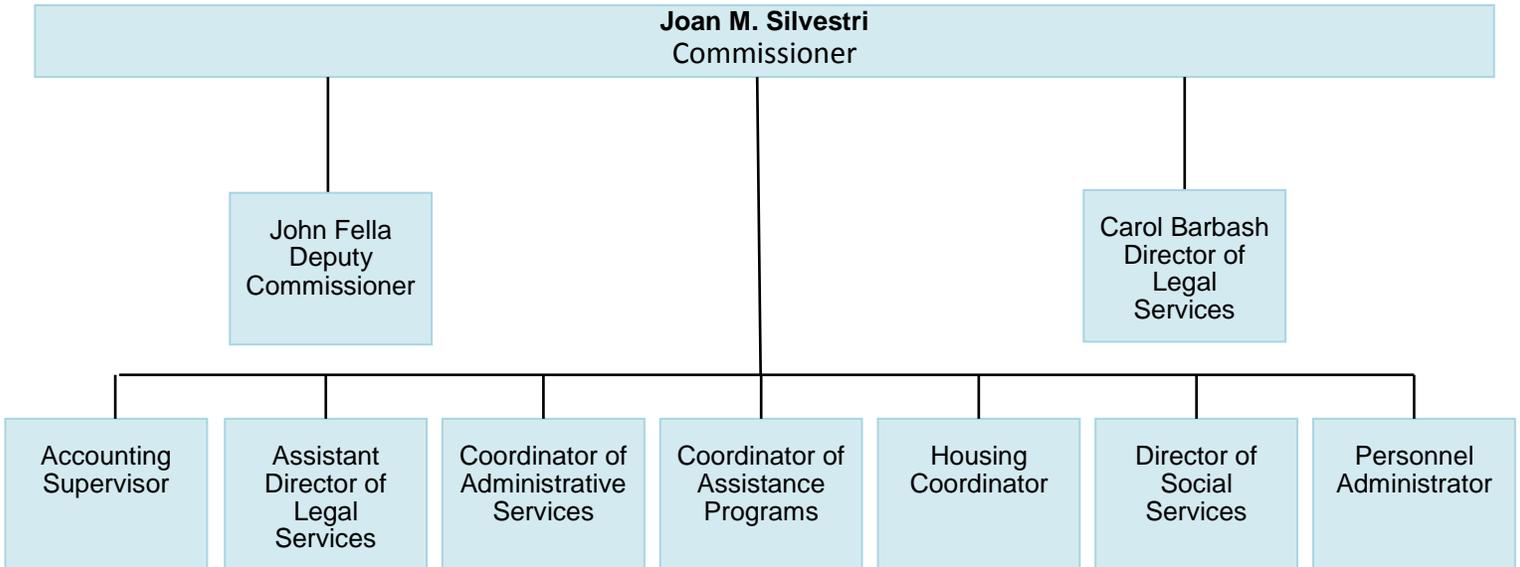
County Executive: Hon. Edwin J. Day

County Legislature: Hon. Toney L Earl, Chairman

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Rockland County Department of Social Services



Rockland County Department of Social Services

VISION

Rockland County communities will enjoy an environment where individuals and families thrive, are safe, and have financial security.

MISSION

Our mission is to partner and engage with individuals, families and communities in Rockland County by providing services to protect the vulnerable, empower them to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency, provide financial assistance, safety and support; with compassion, respect and dignity.



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

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE

		2017	2018	% Change
Active Temporary Assistance Cases				
	Family Assistance	403	335	-16.9%
	Safety Net	557	532	-4.5%
	Total Active Cases	960	867	-9.7%
Temporary Assistance Case Activity				
	Applications Processed	2,655	2,490	-6.2%
	Cases Opened	1,669	1,635	-2.0%
	Withdrawals	94	121	29.0%
	Denials	892	734	-18.0%
	Cases Closed	1,153	1,305	13.2%
	Recertifications	1,565	1,421	-9.2%
	Changes in Active Cases	6,424	6,241	-2.8%
	Total Case Activities	11,797	11,457	-2.9%
Temporary Assistance Recipients				
	Family Assistance	903	733	-19.0%
	Safety Net	901	851	-5.5%
	Total Recipients Year End	1,804	1,584	-12.2%

SNAP

		2017	2018	% Change
Active SNAP Cases				
	Non-Public Assistance	14,399	14,333	-0.5%
	Public Assistance	626	987	57.7%
	Total Active Cases	15,025	15,320	2.0%
SNAP Case Activity				
	Applications Processed (Non-Public Assistance)	8,870	7,729	-12.9%
	Cases Opened	6,407	5,966	-6.9%
	Withdrawals	352	287	-18.0%
	Denials	1,811	1,476	-18.0%
	Cases Closed	6,738	6,633	-1.6%
	Recertifications	9,006	8,756	-2.8%
	Changes in Active Cases	22,433	19,641	-12.4%
	Total Case Activities	46,747	42,759	-8.5%
SNAP Recipients Year End				
		42,499	40,914	-3.7%

A decrease in Temporary Assistance and SNAP recipients is due to the continued decrease in the unemployment rate and in part to our successful efforts in assisting 249 clients obtain employment and continuing the implementation of the 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

		2017	2018	% Change
MEDICAID	Medicaid Case Activity			
	Applications Processed	6,674	6,292	-5.7%
	Cases Opened	4,273	4,350	1.8%
	Withdrawals	335	254	-24.2%
	Denials	2,046	1,688	-17.5%
	Cases Closed	10,132	4,046	-60.0%
	Recertifications	5,637	6,008	6.6%
	Changes in Active Cases	25,052	28,054	12.0%
	Total Case Activities	47,495	44,400	-6.5%
	Medicaid Recipients Year End - Applied through DSS	33,135	16,371	-50.6%
Medicaid Recipients Year End - Applied through New York State of Health (NYSOH)	74,113	94,841	28.0%	
Medicaid Recipients Year End - TOTAL	107,248	111,212	3.7%	

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

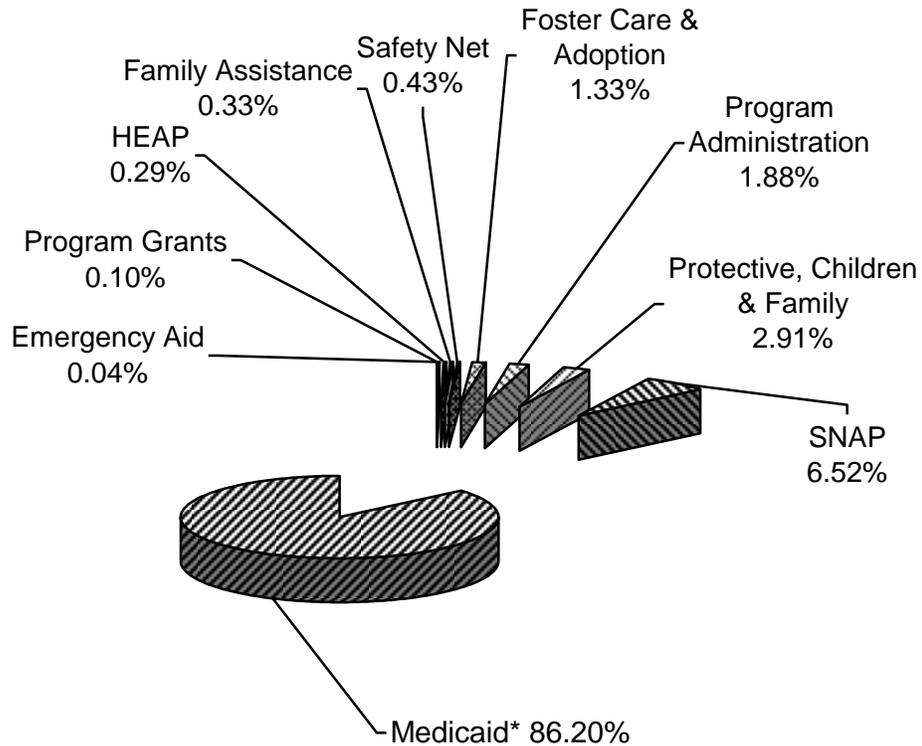
EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM

<u>Program</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Medical Assistance (Medicaid)*	\$866,792,414	\$935,185,685	\$68,393,271	7.9%
SNAP**	73,893,907	70,730,818	(3,163,089)	-4.3%
Family Assistance	4,075,865	3,529,628	(546,237)	-13.4%
Safety Net	4,355,463	4,343,509	(8,046)	-0.27%
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)**	3,035,415	3,182,398	146,983	4.8%
Emergency Aid	343,669	405,995	62,326	18.1%
Protective, Children and Family**	29,770,660	31,570,226	1,799,566	6.0%
Foster Care and Adoption Assistance**	16,297,529	14,405,504	(1,892,025)	11.6%
Program Grants	1,158,226	1,090,895	(67,331)	-5.8%
Program Administration	<u>19,475,736</u>	<u>20,430,155</u>	<u>954,419</u>	<u>4.9%</u>
	\$1,019,178,884	\$1,084,874,813	\$65,695,929	6.4%

*2017 and 2018 expenditures include expenses for individuals who applied through DSS and NYSOH.

**Includes Program Administration

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM EXPENSES AS A % OF TOTAL EXPENDITURES



*2018 Medicaid expenditures include expenses for individuals who applied through DSS and NYSOH.

MEDICAID EXPENDITURES* BY PROVIDER

<u>Provider Type</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Hospital Inpatient	\$41,313,701	\$44,202,861	\$2,889,160	7.0%
Hospital Outpatient	10,055,755	7,344,860	(2,710,895)	-27.0%
Skilled Nursing Facility	67,392,873	63,618,886	(3,773,987)	-5.6%
Intermediate Care Facility for Developmentally Disabled	8,909,097	0	(8,909,097)	-100%
Clinic	26,156,594	34,488,620	8,332,026	31.9%
Hospice	414,426	482,678	68,252	16.5%
Physicians	3,450,740	3,659,835	209,095	6.1%
Dental	425,972	299,273	(126,699)	-29.7%
Other Practitioners	4,714,849	4,026,451	(688,398)	-14.6%
Child Care Instl Per Diem	469,201	293,532	(175,669)	-37.4%
Personal Care	14,452,338	16,504,548	2,052,210	14.2%
Home Health Services	452,682	374,840	(77,842)	-17.2%
Assisted Living Program	7,780,021	8,826,426	1,046,405	13.4%
Waived Services	148,850,412	163,050,540	14,200,128	9.5%
Rehab and Therapy	133,398	180,929	47,531	35.6%
Rehab Options Services	21,583,134	24,349,161	2,766,027	12.8%
Drugs and Supplies	11,082,633	10,538,555	(544,078)	-4.9%
Eye Appliance and Durable Medical Equipment	646,674	586,213	(60,461)	-9.3%
Prepaid Care	480,875,810	531,086,203	50,210,393	10.4%
Care Management Plans	8,281,402	9,648,452	1,367,050	16.5%
Transportation	6,212,155	6,503,303	291,148	4.7%
Lab and X-ray	788,283	793,199	4,916	0.6%
Other**	<u>2,349,723</u>	<u>4,326,319</u>	<u>1,976,055</u>	<u>84.1%</u>
Total	\$866,792,414	\$935,185,685	\$68,393,271	7.8%
Administration	<u>6,934,942</u>	<u>6,247,357</u>	<u>(687,585)</u>	<u>-9.9%</u>
Medicaid Grand Total	\$873,727,356	\$941,433,042	\$67,705,686	7.9%

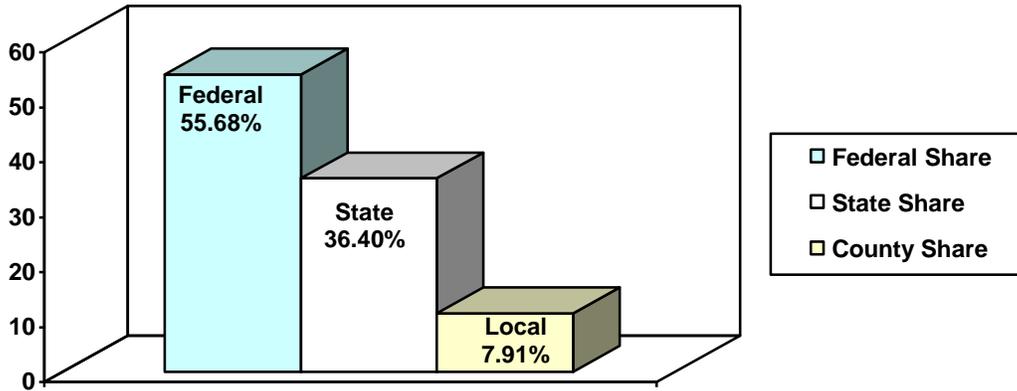
*2017 and 2018 expenditures include expenses for individuals who applied through DSS and NYSOH.

<u>Source</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Local Share	\$65,293,683	\$66,673,218	\$1,379,535	2.1%

REVENUE BY SOURCE **PROGRAM GRANTS**

REVENUE BY SOURCE

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Federal	\$575,972,422	\$604,062,707	4.9%
State	351,786,449	394,944,335	12.3%
County	91,420,013	85,867,771	- 6.1%
Totals	\$1,019,178,884	\$1,084,874,813	6.4%



**PROGRAM GRANTS –
EXPENDED IN 2018**

Supervision & Treatment Services for Juveniles Program	\$28,805
Executive Order 151	\$38,612
Family Day Care Registration (CCR)	\$470,245
Non-Residential Domestic Violence	\$56,676
PINS Prevention FFFS Plan	\$17,972
Safe Harbor	\$76,308
Summer Youth Employment Program	<u>\$402,277</u>
Total	\$1,090,895

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 diligently 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.*

New York Social Services law requires local districts to have a Citizen's Advisory Council and Rockland has an active Council consisting of over 40 members representing hospitals, schools, service providers, non-profit agencies, and recipients of services. The purpose of the Council is to advise the Commissioner concerning programs and policies pertaining to public assistance, medical care and services to children, families and adults. The Council also assists in identifying service gaps in the community, assists the Department in publicizing available programs and helps to educate constituents, service providers and public officials regarding the Department's policies.



COMMUNITY SPEAKS - excerpts from customer's letters DSS received

"If it wasn't for them I would not have made it as far as I did – they kept me on the right path."

"Thank you for your assistance and sharing your wonderful stories and photos. They helped to make my current nightmare less overwhelming."

"Thank you so much for listening to me, hearing me, respecting me and helping me in the midst of this most recent disaster. I'm trusting it's temporary and your patience and assistance mean so much and I appreciate what you have done and wanted to thank you!"



Each year, the Home Finding Unit takes advantage of the **YOUTHFEST** held at Rockland Community College to promote recruitment for foster parents. The YOUTHFEST provides residents with access to the many youth and family services available in Rockland County.

LEFT: Yasmine Boulay-Descardes, Case Supervisor, Grade B, at the YOUTHFEST at Rockland Community College.

The Home Finding Unit held their annual picnic and holiday party for the foster/adoptive families. The picture below depicts DSS's own Theresa O'Rourke, as Mrs. Claus, and her husband as Santa. Many of the toys distributed to our foster care children were donated by the Chance Cosgrove Foundation, DSS and Rockland County Employees, and members of the public.



DSS STAFF INITIATIVES: Throughout the year, DSS staff helped many of our residents by collecting and distributing needed items. Many staff also support the Parent Aid Fund (PAF) Inc., a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide financial assistance to children and families with special needs, who have no access to other public or private funds. Parent Aid Fundraisers were held throughout the year where DSS staff, retirees, and volunteers played major roles in organizing and participating. See below pictures taken during one of the many PAF fundraisers.



DSS Staff collaborated with People to People on the Giving Tree, an annual month-long event at the Palisades Mall, where residents can drop off new toys for children of all age groups. DSS Staff also collected numerous boxes (placed in DSS staffed buildings) of toys to be distributed during the holidays to needy children.

Gift cards and other holiday donations are also received for our elderly population from DSS caring staff.

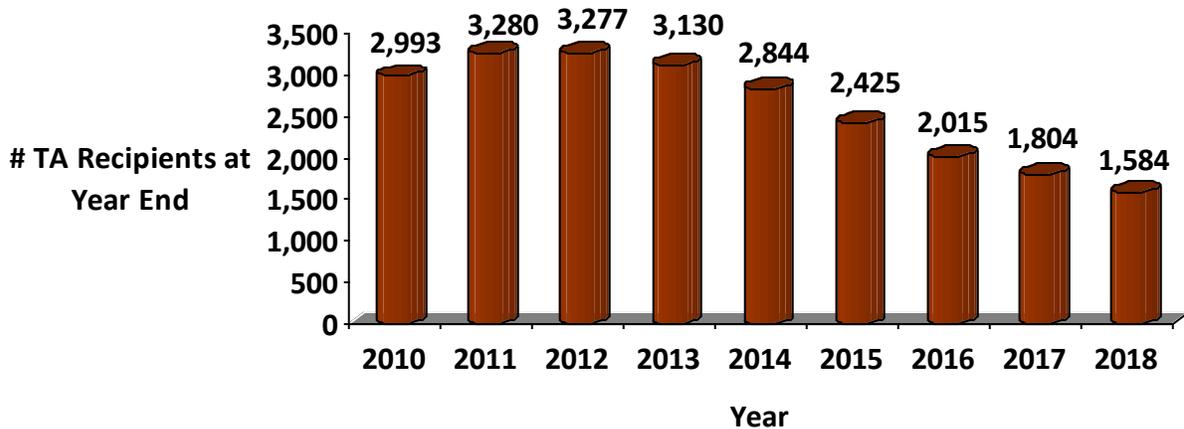
ADMINISTRATION OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

MISSION STATEMENT

Partnering with Rockland County by providing and supporting families and individuals with temporary cash assistance; paying for food; heating assistance; childcare subsidies so people can go to work; employment services to overcome barriers by supporting education, job preparation, substance abuse treatment; assisting homeless families and individuals in finding affordable, permanent housing; providing affordable, comprehensive health insurance to meet individual medical needs and healthier outcomes

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 2018, approximately 1,584 individuals were receiving Temporary Assistance.

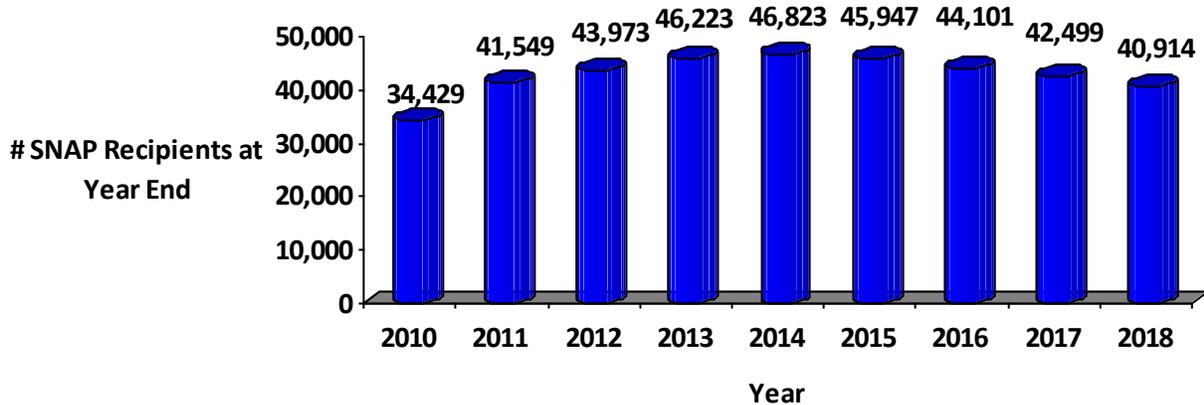


The **SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)** serves as the first line of defense against hunger and enables families to supplement their food budget.

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 (40,914 individuals) were receiving SNAP at year end, with 3,172 individuals/ married couples receiving SSI SNAP.

A decrease in Temporary Assistance and SNAP recipients is due to our successful efforts in assisting 249 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 249 residents find employment. 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.

Currently, Rockland County requires SNAP recipients identified as ABAWDs to participate in work activities. ABAWD stands for “able-bodied adults without dependents.” Federal law requires ABAWDs to meet additional work requirements to receive SNAP benefits for more than three months in a 36-month period. They must participate in qualifying work activities for a least 80 hours a month, be granted an exclusion consistent with their social services district’s ABAWD exclusion policy or reside in an area with a waiver approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In addition, any non ABAWD SNAP recipients who request assistance with employment are directed to the Employment Unit where they are connected to our community partners.

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 677 families and single adults who were assessed by the Housing Unit, 184 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.

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.

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.

\$5,966,948.74 was provided to assist 5,951 eligible residents with their energy bills through HEAP for the 2018 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.

More than \$7,400,000 was distributed to approximately 1,104 children per month from 568 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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SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AND SECTION 8

MISSION STATEMENT

Partnering with our internal and external partners to provide temporary emergency shelter for individuals and families with the goal of transitioning into permanent, safe affordable housing.

The Department of Social Services operates two supportive housing programs, Rapid Re-housing and Permanent Supportive Housing. These programs are funded by Housing and Urban Development through the county's Continuum of Care (CoC). Permanent supportive housing is permanent housing programs which provides rental assistance for an unlimited amount of time in combination with supportive services. These programs are to assist homeless persons with a disability or families with an adult or child member with a disability achieve housing stability. The Rapid Rehousing program connects individuals or families experiencing homelessness with permanent housing by providing rental subsidies for up to two years, along with targeted supportive services to help maintain safe, affordable housing. Both programs, use the Housing First model to quickly move the homeless into permanent housing. Eligibility is determined through the Coordinated Entry process, in which the chronically homeless with the most service needs are prioritized and given housing opportunities first. Referrals to Coordinated Entry are completed by the Emergency Housing Unit.

Rockland County Department of Social Services administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program, a federally funded rental assistance to qualified tenants in privately owned rental housing. We currently administer 1017 Vouchers in Rockland County. This past year a lottery was held with over 9000 applicants from across the country, in which 1000 names were chosen. The Department of Social Services was awarded on filling 8 Mainstream Vouchers in 2018.

The Section 8 Unit is responsible for the recertification and inspection of all Section 8 housing units annually.

TEMPORARY HOUSING

The Department of Social Services recently completed their second season at the County's **Warming Center**. The Department of Social Services has responsibility for the oversight and operation of the Warming Center, which opened in 2017 in response to Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 32 Code Blue Initiative. The Center is operational from November 1st through April 30th and is open each night regardless of the temperature and during the day when the temperature with the wind chill are below 32 degrees. The Warming Center is located at the Robert Yeager Health Center and provides a warm and welcoming environment for any individual looking for a safe place to stay. This season, Catholic Charities was awarded the contract to manage the daily operations at the Warming Center. The Department of Social Services has staff located at the Center five mornings and a few evenings each week to assist guests with applying for services as well as offering assistance with locating permanent housing options. The Department of Mental Health also has a staff member assigned twice weekly to assist with assessments and referrals. The Sheriff's Department is also actively involved and provides support and back up as needed. There are weekly staff meetings with the team members to review cases and to discuss housing options. This season, the Warming Center was open 47 days and 181 nights. The average night time census was 54 guests. The Warming Center Staff was able to successfully obtain housing for 64 formerly homeless guests prior to the Center closing for the season.

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 76.62 days, a slight increase from 2017, where the average length of stay was 74 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.

Twenty-two new families were admitted to the Shelter in 2018; a total of 29 families resided in the Shelter throughout the year.

Year	New Families Admitted	Adults/Children Residing Throughout Year	
		Adults	Children
2014	20	23	31
2015	29	36	49
2016	28	31	49
2017	31	44	72
2018	22	35	57

In addition to these statistics, the number of families who returned to the Emergency Family Shelter was 3 families in 2018.

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MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

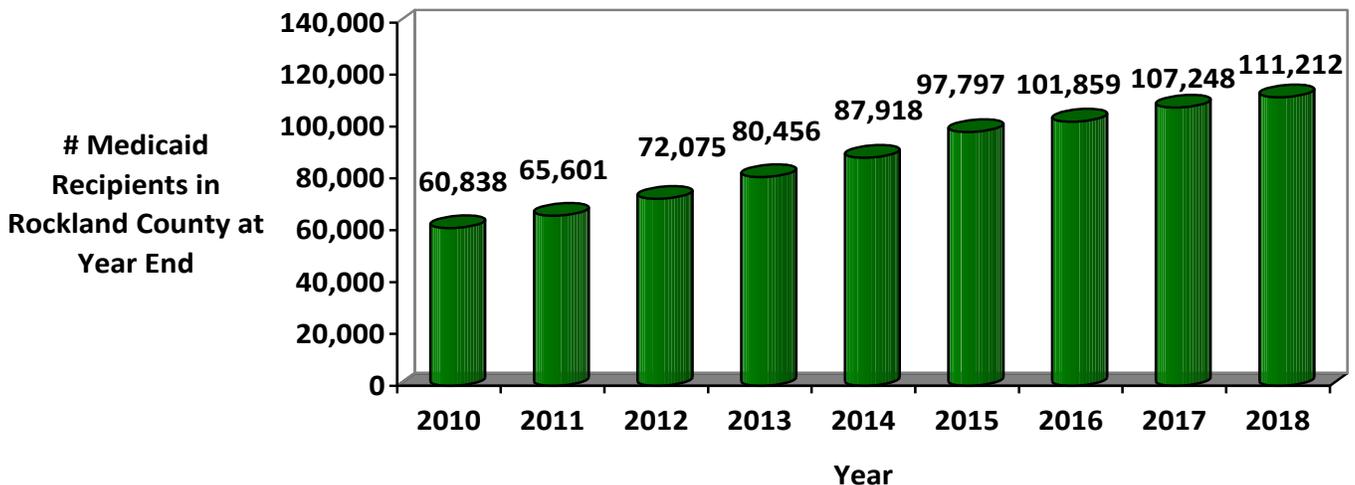
Medicaid provides health care coverage to income-eligible individuals. The program is administered by individual states according to Federal requirements.

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 85% 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 2018 approximately 111,000 residents were receiving Medicaid in Rockland County: 16,371 through DSS and 94,841 through the New York State of Health.



SOCIAL SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT

Partnering with Rockland County families, in a respectful and culturally competent manner, to reach the common goal of a secure and safe environment where all individuals and families thrive.

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.

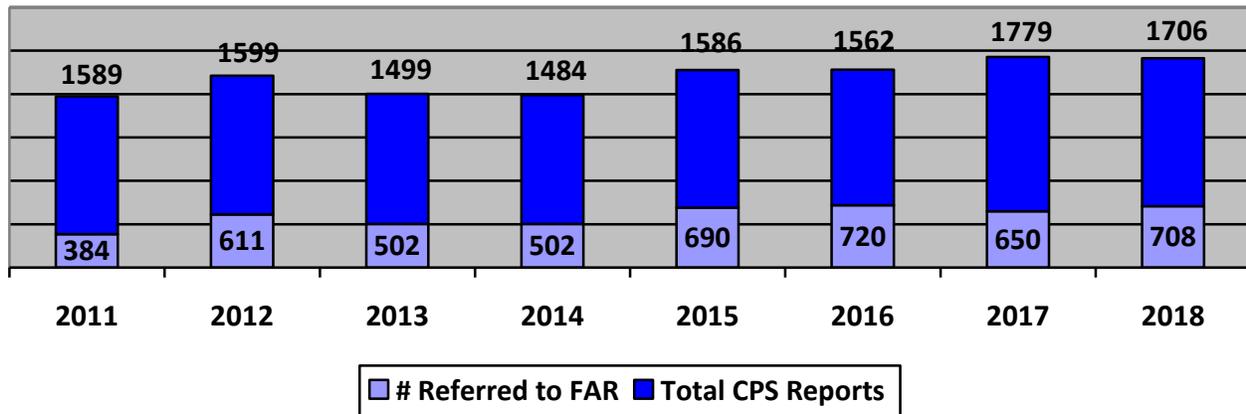
In 2018, Child Protective Services received a total of 1,706 reports from the State Central Register (SCR), a 5% decrease from 2017 (1,779). The FAR Unit assessed 708 reports while the CPS Investigative Unit investigated 998 reports. FAR accounted for 41.5% of the total reports from the SCR. Of the 998 Investigative reports, 890 were initial reports. Of the 890 initial reports, 686 were maltreatment, 124 were sexual abuse and 80 were physical abuse investigations. There were 108 investigative subsequent reports. Of the 708 reports assigned to FAR, 652 were new reports and 56

were subsequent reports. On average, the CPS and FAR Units assessed an average number of 128 cases each month.

Investigative Caseworkers removed a total of 40 children (8% decrease from 2017) for either neglect or abuse. Twenty-one of those children were placed with relatives in direct custody, and 19 were placed into foster care. Out of the 40 total children that were placed, the highest concentration of children (15) were removed from the Spring Valley area. All children who were removed were maintained in their school district's of origin.

In 2018, Rockland continued to have the lowest recurrence of neglect/abuse within New York State (8.18%) compared to the NYS average of 17.9%.

CPS Reports



“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.

DSS provided training to school and community organizations to assist with identifying and reporting early signs of potential abuse and neglect of children and at-risk behavior of youth. Staff also analyzes and interprets data and identify trends in child welfare, sharing this information with the community to streamline and improve the delivery of services.

DSS continues to engage staff from all seven school districts in Rockland County to identify risk factors early. School districts are encouraged to make Family Services referrals early rather than waiting for the family to be in crisis or necessitate a call to the State Central Registry. East Ramapo continues to have the highest number of calls (67:193 or 35%) to the State Central Registry. As a result, a DSS Caseworker is assigned to the East Ramapo School District to reduce the need for calls to Registry. A total of 203 direct inquiries pertaining to referrals for family services, Partnership for Safe Youth, family assessments, Child Protective Service’s questions, etc.

DSS participated in 32 community Collaborative Meeting to build connectedness with community providers. In collaboration with the Probation Department, 10 PINS Orientation presentations were given. Numerous Mandated Reporter trainings and Child Welfare Information Meetings were provided to various community organizations including the Rockland County Department of Health, New Square, Head Start, Springhill Ambulance Corp, Stony Point Conference Center, Pomona Middle School staff, RCDSS Family Shelter staff, Clarkstown North High School, Work-site Daycare, Haverstraw Headstart, and Rockland County School District Guidance Counselor staff.

Rockland County DSS 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 continues to partner with the Center for Safety and Change to promote the Safe Harbour Initiative, identify youth at risk, make assessments and provide referrals and services to youth and their families. The Safe Harbour Program has serviced 83 individuals as of 12/31/18. Outreach is conducted through advertising; distribution of awareness material; and education and trainings in hospitals, school districts, hotels, libraries, colleges, community agencies, 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 2018, Safe Harbour grant money paid for two Center for Safety and Change staff members to be trained on the Girls' Circle Curriculum. This is evidenced-based group counseling service that is now being offered to youth in the county. A screening tool is being utilized across systems to identify victims of human trafficking. A cross system Multi-Disciplinary Team is being used to discuss and strategize around engagement and services for youth who are being trafficked or who are at risk of trafficking. There are quarterly Regional Meetings and an annual summit where information and ideas are shared amongst other counties providing Safe Harbour services. DSS Safe Harbour is also represented quarterly at the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force Meeting.

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.

In 2018, the Adolescent Unit hired a Youth Peer Advocate. Qualifications for the position includes having lived experience with the systems. The purpose of the position is to improve engagement, connectedness and long- term outcomes for youth.

The Adolescent Team received a total of 127 new referrals in 2018 which was a 10% increase from 2017.

The Department of Social Services helped to coordinate and write a plan to prepare for Raise the Age legislation, which raised the age of criminality to 17 years old on October 1, 2018 and it will increase to 18 years old on October 1, 2019. All 16-year-old, Raise the Age youth were diverted from placement in 2018.

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 173 new cases in 2018, a 20% decrease from 2017 (214).

Compared to the other New York State Counties, families from Rockland County who received Family Services were successfully diverted away from being neglected or abused. Rockland achieved the second lowest number of children neglected or abused (4.6%) within 12 months of receiving Family Services compared to the NYS average of 13.8%. Rockland achieved the lowest number of neglected or abused children (8.2%) within 24 months of receiving Family Services compared to the NYS average of 18.1%.

DSS is a key stakeholder in Rockland's Family Treatment Court (FTC) Improvement Initiative with 12 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. In 2018, there were 6 families that graduated from the program.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES includes the Foster Home Finding & Certification, Therapeutic Foster Boarding Home, Visitation and Transportation and Adoption Units. It 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 primary goal of family reunification.

At the end of 2018, there were 60 foster homes in Rockland County and 40 youth were in foster care placement. There was a 33% (40:60) decrease in the number of youths in foster care between 2017 and 2018. The Foster Care Unit continued to concentrate on recruiting foster homes and keeping adolescents in the community and had the lowest percentage of children in foster care in the State of New York.

As of December 31, 2018, the Foster Care staff monitored 153 children including the following: 25 children were in direct custody; 1 child in a diagnostic placement; 40 in certified foster homes; 13 in Kinship foster care; 3 in a group home; 3 children from out-of-state placed with relatives within the county; 7 in pre-adoptive foster homes; 34 siblings of children in placement or children returned from foster care; 5 children in residential treatment centers. Staff provided two Independent Living Workshops which encouraged youth participation in financial planning and homemaking activities.

In 2018, there were 9 children placed for purpose of collecting diagnostic information to help identify appropriate treatment. Fifteen children were provided respite services at Children's Village Sanctuary, and 4 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.

Seven children were adopted in 2018.

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 2018, the Visitation Unit provided coaching to 2 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 2018.

	Car Usage	Drug Tests**	Swabs	Urines	Visits	Transports	Visitors	Bus Tickets	Coached
Total	4,936	3,944	2,273	1,608	1,650	2,810	3,185	3,223	2 families

** Includes both swabs and urines.

Adult and Special Services



Partnering with Rockland County, Adult Protective Services (APS) and Adult Services (AS) are dedicated to the protection and support of vulnerable adults, through community involvement and collaboration of services to identify, prevent, and address abuse and exploitation of adults as well as enable adults to remain in the least restrictive environment.

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. In 2018, PSA received 726 referrals which was *the highest number of referrals ever received* and this trend continues to increase.

Legislation commonly known as “Code Blue” continues to assist the homeless in inclement weather conditions. During these times, PSA provides aggressive outreach 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. In 2018, thirty (30) individuals were referred and assigned to the PSA Unit for assistance in locating appropriate housing or placement and obtaining services. This was accomplished in collaboration with the Temporary Assistance and Housing Units.

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.

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 2018, 85 cases were referred regarding Hoarding or Environmental Hazards. PSA also assist individuals in maintaining the progress they made in addressing these environmental issues.

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 2018, the Unit handled 37 cases involving financial management.

Protective Services for Adults continues to be involved with Rockland County's Finance Department regarding Tax Foreclosure Properties. In 2018 there were 31 cases in which workers assisted residents by providing them with information on services such as refinancing and payment plans which could prevent foreclosure. Of these cases none of properties which were occupied by residences went to foreclosure.

A major role of PSA is to identify and address circumstances of Adult Abuse. In 2018, 219 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.

Personal Care cases continue to transition to Managed Care Companies where Medicaid recipient's long-term care needs are met. This transition continues to be a slow process with our department continuing to maintain a caseload of 400. Some contributing factors to this caseload are the need for our department to provide Personal Care Services where the recipient receives 8 hours or less (Level 1) or where there is a need to provide PCA services in the time period before a Managed Care company can provide services known as "Bridge the Gap." In addition, when Personal Care Services are requested by a client and their physician agrees that 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. Adult Services staff working with the Elliot, a contract agency which provides nursing assessments for Personal Care, must conduct an assessment and develop a plan of care. In addition, Adult Services is utilizing a tracking system regarding clients who are receiving services from Health Homes to better provide services to the client.

Adult Services staff 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. In the upcoming year these waiver programs are expected to be combined under one waiver program. Lastly Adult Service staff maintains the "Helpful Resources for Individual of Families Directory." This resource directory provides a list of services and eligibility information that assists individuals and families economically or emotional. The directory is available on the County of Rockland Website under Department of Social Services.

ENFORCEMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

Partnering with Rockland County to be the finest provider of legal services on behalf of the Department of Social Services so that the Department and the vulnerable population we serve are afforded their legal rights, with the highest degree of professionalism and integrity.

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 522 parental 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 FEDS program is a simple and cost-effective way to identify and avoid expending benefits on behalf of ineligible applicants at intake and is preferable to costly and time/labor-intensive back end Fraud eligibility investigations.

In 2018, the SIU received 172 new FEDS referrals for investigation, completing 168, which resulted in the denial of fifty-eight (58) applications and an estimated \$427,776 in New York State defined cost-avoidance.

The SIU also received 458 new Fraud (back end) referrals, completing 485 (some received in 2017), resulting in thirty (30) new Fraud overpayments totaling \$307,226 and on-going recoveries totaling \$310,777. Additionally, sixty-six (66) active assistance cases were closed as the direct result of Fraud investigations resulting in an additional \$272,468 in estimated cost-avoidance. Combined FEDS (\$427,776) and Fraud (\$272,468) cost-avoidance totaled \$700,244.

SIU FEDS/Fraud 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.

In 2018, the SIU and the Resource Unit staff and functions were combined.

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 2018, \$366,064 was collected by the Resource Recovery Team; over 500 new collections cases were established on behalf of TA, SNAP, HEAP, SIU and O&R reconciliation; and 170 judgments were prepared and filed electronically with the Rockland County Clerk on delinquent consumers. In addition, 70 indigent burial arrangements were coordinated with local funeral homes and cemeteries. Starting in March 2019, the indigent burial component of the Resource Unit will be transitioned to the Medicaid Unit.

Both SIU and Resource Unit 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 2018, \$27.8 million in child support was collected and distributed to 6,214 custodial parents, pursuant to CSEU's efforts to establish, collect and enforce child support orders on behalf of our clients.

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ADMINISTRATION

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

WELFARE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (WMS)

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 the social service programs. These applications directly enable DSS employees to strengthen communities by serving Rockland's individuals and families.

WMS resolved 3,227 requests in 2018 for employee technical assistance, as reported by the WMS Online Helpdesk System which was launched in October 2016.

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 4,371 new cases in 2018.

WMS implements statewide technology modernization efforts designed to reduce agency costs and improve worker productivity. Over 130 Elite Books have been deployed to casework staff to improve timely entry of progress and case notes.

Staff provides statistical data extracted from various sources within the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and Department of Health (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 Rockland 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.

Assistance provided to residents of Rockland County exceeded \$1 Billion in 2018, a 6.5% increase as compared to 2017. Medicaid expenses comprise more than 86% of the County's total budget and account for more than \$935 Million. The majority of the 6.5% increase over 2017 is related to the Medicaid expenses. The second largest expense is for the Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps). SNAP expenses accounted for \$70,730,818, or 6.52% of the County's Budget.

Federal support toward overall assistance costs exceeds 55% (\$604,062,707), State aid accounts for approximately 36% (\$394,944,335), and local share is slightly less than 8% (\$85,867,771). Revenue sources include grant awards (\$1,090,895) and repayment of assistance from clients (\$678,600).

Detailed information regarding program expenditures and revenues can be found on pages 8-10.

AUDIT/ADMINISTRATION POLICY TEAM

In 2018, DSS launched a sweeping Policy Initiative to prioritize Agency performance in three key areas: Regulatory compliance, client services delivery and increased efficiency between internal units.

In pursuit of achieving these goals, the Commissioner assembled an Audit and Policy Team to audit current operations, identify deficiencies, legal and regulatory mandates and address key operational issues. The Team works collaboratively with all DSS Units to develop guidelines, procedures, processes and employee trainings which ensure that Agency compliance and expectations are met. The Team's efforts assure accountability throughout the Agency while ensuring consistent provision of the accurate level of benefits and services to Rockland's residents. The Team develops and implements policies in accordance with State and Federal regulations, as well as State administrative directives. The process includes a legal review and analysis, as well as, an audit review from the Auditing Unit.

Agency investment in internal policy development yields high returns. Clear identification of Agency compliance goals and requirements, in tandem with updating internal procedures and employee training enables staff to work more efficiently and focus their efforts on delivering services that protect the vulnerable and provide financial assistance for residents in need. Tighter internal controls improve program integrity, helping to uncover and avert welfare waste and fraud, while improving the Agency's accountability to Rockland's taxpayers.

During 2018, twelve distinct audits were conducted which resulted in significant operation shifts and eight new policies.

OPERATIONS, ANALYSIS AND PLANNING (OAP)

OAP 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, site visits at least twice per year, and legal review of contract services. In 2018, OAP was responsible for 196 contracts totaling \$3,783,602 and 8 grants totaling \$1,690,631.

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.

In 2018, OAP developed a streamlined processing system for voucher submission and payment. The contract process was also streamlined, allowing for an improved procurement process for the service contracts, resulting in execution of more contract earlier in the year; thereby, creating a seamless continuation of services.

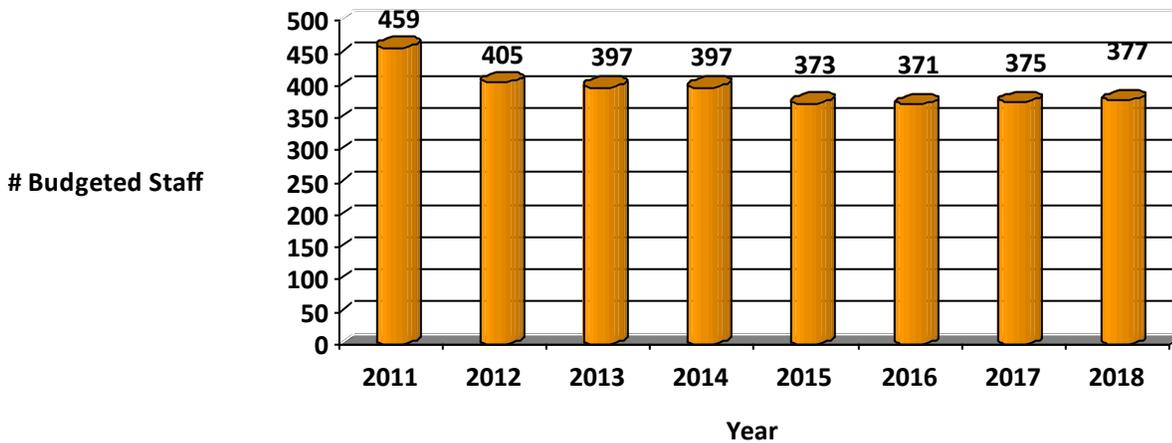
MISSION STATEMENT

Partnering with Rockland County DSS employees, Personnel provides comprehensive human resources information and services to affect an engaged and efficient workforce.

The **PERSONNEL OFFICE AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT** serve the Department of Social Services by focusing efforts on the Department's employees. The Personnel Office does this through the 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.

Personnel Office staff is responsible for providing delivery of a human resources program to and for the Department's units and staff. DSS currently consists of 353 employees in fifty-two units. In 2018, the office scheduled 207 interviews for 29 different position titles. Forty-two new hires were processed as well as 40 separations. Other functions currently being provided are employee selection, maintaining personnel records, compliance with American for Disabilities Act, exit interviews, benefit and payroll administration.

In 2018, the number of budgeted staff was 377.



The Staff Development Unit worked closely with all internal units in the implementation and coordination of trainings associated to new directives and procedures from Federal, State and Local administrations. Staff Development also managed all logistics of a wide range of professional development opportunities for DSS staff. Various day long trainings were hosted in response to the employee engagement survey, including the High-Performance Customer Service and Work Skills to Build a Better Workplace Trainings.

2018 saw a significant increase in introductory and supervisory trainings in response to personnel activity and employee interest in advancing their professional skills. A series of lunch and learn preparation trainings was offered for staff taking the Social Welfare Examiner examination. The Precautionary Safety and Active Shooter Training by the Sheriff Department was delivered at the Fire Training Center. Sessions were offered for both office and field workers.

In February Staff Development worked the logistics in the launching of mobile devices. The unit coordinated online as well as classroom trainings for Information Security for staff assigned a mobile device. Over 200 trainees participated in the sessions.

Staff Development facilitated 834 workshops, seminars and conferences, totaling 9,078 hours (50 percent more than 2017) of staff training in key areas of professional development.

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The Department of Social Services believes strongly in recognizing employees for their efforts. During 2018, the Department awarded 45 On-The-Spot Awards, which enable supervisors to award recognition to a staff member/s to recognize their accomplishments and efforts towards achieving the department goal. The following are Spot Awards presented in 2018 to staff members.

On the Spot

*A client wrote in to thank and give praise to **Deena Roedema** who assisted the client with housing, school supplies for her children and applying for HEAP. The client indicated that Deena was always looking out for her best interest and was considerate and hard working. The client closed her letter by saying "I would give Deena an A plus, plus."*

***Aimee Irons** assisted an aged, disabled client whose SNAP benefits were being used by his aid without his permission or knowledge. Aimee convinced the client to allow APS to intervene. Subsequently, the aid was replaced, and APS continues to monitor the client.*

*We received a call from a client who indicated the help and encouragement he received from **Veronica Petriccione** changed his life. He stated she was professional and persistent, and she pointed him in the right direction.*

***Dennis Granata** received a letter from a client who was prompted to write in because of the way she was treated. Dennis treated the client with respect and compassion and quickly and efficiently helped her with an emergency.*

***Alyssa Mills** assisted a client who was so appreciative of the help she offered that he reached out to the County Executive's office to commend her for her dedication. The client's situation was difficult but because of Alyssa's patience and understanding she was able to work with the client to formulate a mutually agreeable plan to minimize the situation and allow for him to live safely and independently.*



Carol Torres while working at the Warming Center found a Warming Center guest unconscious in the parking lot. Carol carried him into the Warming Center and immediately began first aid and chest rubs. Carol had the Warming Center team call 911. Carol quickly realized that this person was overdosing and administered NARCAN saving the individual's life. Carol truly cares for the people she serves. The picture above shows Carol being recognized by Commissioner Silvestri.



Melissa Pepper, Robin Dillon, Karen Besley and Supervisor **Marianna Avarali**, each played a part in assisting a homeless client. Robin Dillon who was originally assigned the client went out to meet with her several times with Marianna however, when Robin needed to attend training Melissa took over and prioritized the case. In the past the client had resisted housing – but because of Melissa's and Karen's dedication and hard work they were able to get the client admitted to Northern Riverview Assisted Living. **Melissa, Robin, Karen and Marianna** are true team players and together they took the time and patience needed to assist one of our clients. Picture above are team members and County Executive Ed Day.

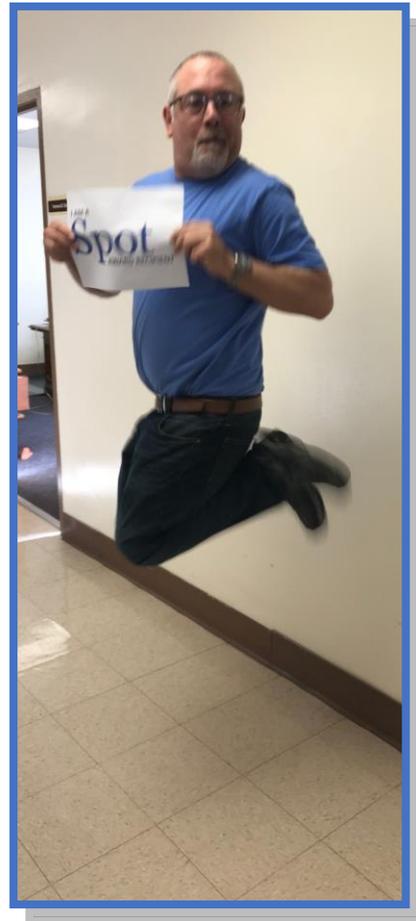




Jennifer Reilly, Sharon Ploss,
Angel Clark, Sheryl Baisley



Gerald Parker and Alfakenia Diaz



Brian Silver jumping for joy after
receiving his Spot Award



Spot Award Recipients



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