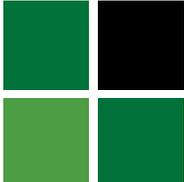




MIDDLESEX COUNTY
BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



From the Director

As you read about the noteworthy work of the staff during 2019, please remember that none of this could have been accomplished without the support and commitment of our Board members and the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Although this report serves as a summary of the achievements of 2019, we would be remiss if we did not comment on and commend the work of our entire staff and administration during 2020, the year in which this report is published and the year a global pandemic devastated families around the world, including right here in Middlesex County.

Due to COVID-19, the Middlesex County Board of Social Services received a surge in the number of applications for TANF, GA, and SNAP programs. The Medicaid and Family Care programs also saw great increases in the number of applications received. Staff were temporarily reassigned and worked overtime to handle this increase in workload, which included 10,239 applications for the SNAP program alone from April through November. Services have been provided primarily via mail, online, and telephone since March 16. All client interviews are being conducted via telephone. Staff are on site to handle inquiries and distribute applications outside the main entrance. Clients were provided program-specific hotlines to handle the additional call volume at this time. Every department was impacted and met the challenges head-on.

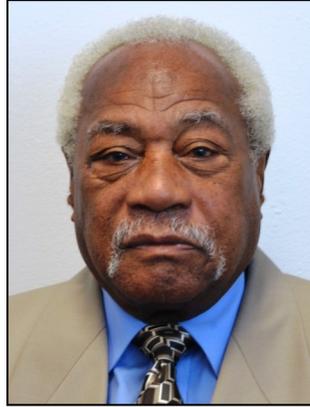
I wish to personally thank our Board Members, administrators and staff for pivoting quickly and effectively to ensure that we could meet the growing demand for our programs. Their dedication to serving our County's residents is commendable, and for that, I am grateful.

Sincerely,
Angela B. Mackaronis

2019 Board Members



Julia Keller
Chairperson



Ernest Banks
Vice Chairperson



Sandra Coleman
Secretary/Treasurer



Patrick F. Gillespie
Assistant Secretary/
Treasurer



Blanquita B. Valenti
Freeholder



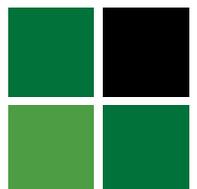
Shanti Narra
Freeholder



Thomas P. Tighe

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Middlesex County Board of Social Services is to administer Federal and State public assistance programs in a competent, compassionate and efficient manner. Our goal is to meet the needs of our clients through the prudent use of public funds.



CLIENT SERVICES

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance (GA)

Work First New Jersey/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (WFNJ/TANF) is a State and Federally funded program that provides temporary cash assistance to eligible families with children. The program is a time-limited program designed to emphasize personal responsibility and reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting self-sufficiency through gainful employment. Exemptions from participation in the work activity exist for those who are disabled, care for a disabled family member, domestic violence victims, or aged 62 or older.

At the end of December 2019, the TANF caseload in New Jersey had decreased 9.5 percent, from 12,113 in December 2018 to 10,957. The TANF caseload in Middlesex County decreased 4.5 percent, from 515 cases in December 2018 to 492 active cases in December 2019. TANF closings occur when earnings, child support, and other income sources exceed income eligibility standards, as well as WFNJ sanctions due to failure to comply with the work requirement or the child support requirement.

The State amended in January 2019 the legislation of the Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations Act for a 10 percent increase of monthly cash assistance effective Jan. 1, 2019. At the same time, the NJ Division of Family Development also waived the work requirement for any federal employee applying for WFNJ benefits due to the partial federal government shutdown. Effective July 1, 2019 recipients of TANF cash assistance benefits received a 20 percent per month increase allocated within the 2020 Fiscal Year budget.

In response to the partial Federal Government shutdown in 2019, the State amended the FY 2019 Appropriations Act to allow for a 10 percent increase of monthly cash assistance for TANF recipients effective Jan. 1, 2019. Effective July 1, 2019, recipients of TANF cash assistance benefits received a 20 percent increase per month allocated within the 2020 Fiscal Year budget.

Work First New Jersey/General Assistance Program (WFNJ/GA) is a State-funded program. New Jersey is one of a few states that still provides temporary cash assistance to single adults and couples without dependent

children. This is a time-limited, means tested program designed to aid needy individuals or couples in achieving self-sufficiency. The goal of the Work First New Jersey program is for clients to gain employment by participating in work activities to develop job skills.

The GA population is defined by two groups, employable and unemployable clients. Employable persons are adults who are able to participate in a job search or work activity. Unemployable persons are exempt from the work activity through a deferral process.

General Assistance recipients also received an increase in their WFNJ monthly grants due to the amended State legislation. Effective January, 2019, GA assistance increased by 10 percent per month, and in July 2019, the grant increased by 20 percent per month.

In 2019, General Assistance cases in New Jersey decreased by 6.9 percent: from 10,664 cases in December 2018 to 9,926 by the end of 2019. GA cases in Middlesex County decreased by 9.8 percent: from 583 in December 2018 to 526 in December 2019. In December 2019, Middlesex County had 155 employable cases and 371 unemployable cases. GA cases are closed for the same reasons TANF cases close.

The County Board of Social Services' TANF and GA Departments oversee the intake application process and active case supervision, which includes eligibility determination of NJ SNAP and Medicaid benefits for these clients. During intake, a client is interviewed to identify any barriers to self-sufficiency. In 2019, 1,476 in-person TANF interviews and 2,413 GA in-person interviews were conducted. For active case supervision, workers interview and process WFNJ redeterminations and SNAP recertifications as well as process household changes affecting the clients' eligible benefits. In 2019, about 6,990 TANF cases and 10,158 GA cases were processed by Agency staff.

Case Management Department

The Case Management Unit (CMU) provides supportive services to all recipients of General Assistance (GA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and/or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients so clients can participate in work activities.

Support includes Comprehensive Social Assessments (CSA) and Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) development. All adult applicants and recipients, minor parents, and 16- to 18-year-olds not

attending school on a full-time basis must complete an Employability Plan Development Tool (EPDT) and sign an IRP. The most intensive case management is directed to those facing the most serious barriers to employment.

CMU staff monitors compliance with the work requirement and is responsible for providing the help necessary to ease the transition from cash assistance to self-sufficiency within 60 months.

Clients are placed in work activities, such as job searching, job readiness assessments, education, ESL classes, vocational or job skills training and the Community Work Experience.

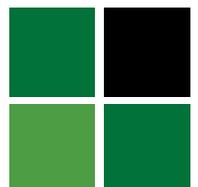
The CSA is a tool designed to identify employment barriers and needed supports, such as child care, work-related expenses and transportation. CMU will arrange and coordinate the necessary supports with appropriate service providers as well as complete case referrals for identified barriers. Barriers may relate to existing medical conditions or family violence. The Substance Abuse Initiative (SAI) and the Behavioral Health Initiative (BHI) provide supportive services for clients facing substance abuse and mental health issues. Recipients dealing with family violence would be referred to the Family Violence Option Initiative (FVO). When WFNJ clients begin the program, they are fully informed of what is expected of them and what will be provided

by the Agency to assist in meeting their responsibilities.

CMU works in partnership with the State Department of Labor (DOL) to verify work activity compliance. In 2019, CMU referred 1,095 TANF recipients, 1,240 GA recipients, and 6,152 SNAP recipients to the DOL.

In 2019, the unit administered 402 CSAs to TANF and GA recipients. Case Management deferred the work requirement for 175 TANF, 537 GA, and 2,145 SNAP clients due to identified barriers. CMU staff also referred 2,069 TANF and GA recipients to the SAI and BHI initiatives and 133 TANF and GA recipients to the FVO initiative. CMU staff referred 948 TANF recipients to child care providers and processed 689 transportation-related expenses for TANF recipients and 6,073 transportation-related expenses for GA and SNAP recipients.

WFNJ is a time-limited program with an allowable lifetime maximum of 60 cumulative months. Seeking and accepting employment are the primary requirements to receive WFNJ/TANF and GA benefits. Some circumstances allow for an extension of benefits beyond 60 months. CMU staff conduct case reviews periodically to determine whether a recipient is eligible for an extension.



Recipients who reach their 48th month of cash assistance are mandated to participate in the Supportive Assistance for Individuals and Families (SAIF) Program, which provides intensive case management for WFNJ recipients who have complied with requirements but have not become self-sufficient and who do not appear to be exempt from the 60-month time limit.

CMU also identifies TANF recipients who secure full-time employment and who may be eligible for post-TANF benefits. The Supplemental Work Support Program (SWS) provides a \$200 monthly payment to TANF clients who meet specific eligibility criteria and agree to voluntarily close their TANF case and continue to maintain employment for up to 24 months. This supplemental assistance payment does not count toward the 60-month lifetime limit.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is run by the federal Department of Agriculture and provides monetary assistance toward food purchases for low-income households. The program is administered by the State of New Jersey and locally through the

Middlesex County Board of Social Services.

Program eligibility is determined by assessing whether a client's total household income falls below the maximum gross income limits and then considers allowable deductions for medical, shelter, and dependent care expenses. In December 2019, there were 24,050 households receiving SNAP benefits in Middlesex County, a 5.5 percent decrease from the previous year. Statewide in December 2019, there were 340,602 households receiving SNAP benefits, a 4.9 percent decrease from the previous year's totals.

State Policy Updates

In January 2019, the State issued several policy updates regarding SNAP benefits. Federal employees affected by the partial federal government shutdown were eligible to apply for SNAP benefits. The State allotted "15 percent exemptions" for Federal Fiscal Year 2019 to prevent the loss of SNAP benefits to Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDS), who were previously subject to the time limit of three months of SNAP benefits while not in compliance within a designated 36-month period. The State also added an eligibility category for higher education students who are enrolled in a Career and Technical Education program under the Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006, which enabled a greater number of students to become eligible to receive SNAP benefits. In April 2019, the State

allowed SNAP applicants and recipients who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to be eligible for the maximum utility deduction regardless of whether they pay toward heating and cooling costs. This in turn, allowed SSI recipients to receive an increase in their SNAP monthly benefits.

In May 2019, the State approved a waiver request of federal rules to allow individuals incarcerated in correctional facilities to apply for SNAP benefits within 30 days of a pending release and to allow county agencies to consider the inmate's release date from the facility as the date of application.

Statistics

Due to the high volume of SNAP cases in Middlesex County, there are two SNAP interviewing units and three SNAP processing units. In 2019, a total of 24,537 SNAP interviews were completed by Agency staff for new, reopening, or recertification applications. Of this total, 20,656 interviews were completed over the telephone, and 3,881 were completed in-person.

Also in 2019, the SNAP Intake Unit processed 10,261 cases. The two Case Supervision units responsible for overseeing all active cases processed 38,484 cases, which included SNAP and SNAS recertifications, as well as changes to SNAP and Interim Reporting. The processing units are supported by the Consultation Unit, which handled 26,203 in-person client inquiries.

Medicaid Department

The Agency Medicaid Department processes applications for those interested in obtaining medical insurance in the community as well as long-term care services. Continues to grow each year. In 2019 the Medicaid Department consulted with 20,460 customers in the office, seeing 474 more customers than in 2018. The Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) phone screening line received 2,231 inquiries, 303 more telephone

In 2019 the Family Care Units processed 9,867 new or reopened Medicaid applications, almost 400 more than in 2018. More significant was the number of renewals completed: In 2018 the Family Care Units completed 22,188 cases, and in 2019 they completed 25,578 cases. That is a production increase of 3,390 renewals. The Family Care staff performed 8,266 changes, an increase of 765 from the 2018. Work was executed on 162 Fair Hearings for Family Care cases.

The Aged, Blind and Disabled Units also experienced increases in applications. The units processed 4,876 new applications, up from 4,810 applications processed in 2018. The Units experienced an extraordinary increase in the number of redeterminations. In 2018 they processed 8,300 State-mandated renewals, consisting of 7,575 long-term care renewals and 725 for community cases. In 2019 the ABD Units processed a total of

11,828 renewals, 3,528 more cases than the previous year. Some 11,215 long-term care renewals and 613 community redeterminations were executed. Consistent with 2018 statistics, the ABD staff finalized 1,855 changes. Also, 157 ABD fair hearings were acted upon during 2019.

Services Department

The Services Department is staffed by a team of social workers, social service aides and technicians and supervisors who assist recipients of the Work First New Jersey programs, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, General Assistance, and Supplemental Security Income households when faced with emergencies that threaten their health and safety or prevent participation in the work activity.

Staff assesses the needs of the household and provides financial assistance through Emergency Assistance (EA) or referral and links to community-based services. Housing and related services, such as utility assistance to prevent emergencies, are the most common forms of assistance.

Although services are primarily office-based, accommodations are made for recipients unable to come to the office due to disability or other barriers. In addition, staff conducts home visits to complete reports for SSI applicants.

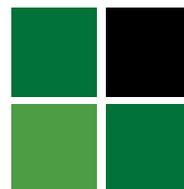
The Service Department supports WFNJ recipients by facilitating participation in programs that address the needs of victims of family violence through the Family Violence Option (FVO) and individuals dealing with behavioral health issues through the Substance Abuse Initiative/Behavior Health Initiative (SAI/BHI).

EA staff sees an average of 1,044 clients each month for Emergency Assistance case-related matters. In 2019, 12,530 clients were seen and served by the Services Department.

Efforts are made to coordinate services with programs within the Agency and in the community to maximize resources for our clients. In addition, Services Department staff works with community vendors and planners to ensure coordination of the Board's programs with community efforts to assist homeless and vulnerable individuals and families. These have included: participation with the Middlesex County Continuum of Care Coalition as well as the Point-In-Time Annual Survey of the Homeless, and seasonal homeless shelters. These efforts are important to the County, as the information can translate into funding for necessary services to address these needs.

Emergency Assistance Program

The Emergency Assistance (EA) program is a supportive service to meet the emergency needs of WFNJ recipients so that they are



not prevented from participating in the work requirement because of disruptions caused by homelessness or related emergencies. The ultimate goal of the EA case is to resolve the emergency that threatens health or safety and to stabilize the household.

EA is available as a companion program, to recipients of TANF, GA, and SSI. EA addresses the substantial loss of housing, food, clothing, household furnishings or utilities by fire, flood or natural disaster. It also addresses homeless clients or those faced with imminent homelessness due to circumstances beyond their control or realistic capacity to plan in advance for substitute housing. Assistance available includes temporary shelter, housing, food, clothing, minimum essential furnishings or utilities. A service plan is developed with the head of the household outlining expectations, requirements and time limits.

EA recipients who are pregnant or have an infant less than 12 months of age are referred to the TANF Initiative for Parents Program (TIP). Since families receiving EA are experiencing stressors as a result of their homelessness or other emergencies, TIP is a child abuse and neglect prevention initiative that offers parenting, nutritional and support services utilizing in-home parenting models of service delivery.

Board and Care

The Services Department monitors

and responds to complaints for 54 rooming houses, three boarding houses and three residential health care facilities (RCHF). Rooming houses, boarding homes and free-standing residential health care facilities are licensed by the NJ Department of Community Affairs.

Boarding homes and rooming houses provide single-unit rooms intended for independent adults for living and sleeping, but not for cooking or eating. Personal and financial services may be offered to residents of boarding homes, but no other services are provided for rooming house residents.

Licensed residential health care facilities provide 24-hour supervision, assistance with personal hygiene, management of funds and supervision of all medications. Nursing services are provided by a registered nurse. Dietary, health maintenance and monitoring services also are provided and include assessment of medical, social and health history needs and corresponding plans to meet those needs. Also provided are arrangements for participation in internal and community activities.

The Board of Social Services monitors the houses and facilities to ensure their resident lists are accurate, house rules are in place and enforced, fire licenses are current, etc. Board staff visits each facility to ensure its compliance with the State's requirements and that residents are appropriately placed and receiving the services they need. Any issue reported by a

resident, community provider, family member or the facility operator regarding problems or needs of a resident is handled as a complaint and is investigated. Any abuse, neglect or exploitation matters are treated as emergencies and result in an immediate response. If necessary, reports are made to the appropriate licensing agencies and if applicable, for their investigation and remediation. The Board coordinates these investigations with all licensing and governmental agencies.

Changes in 2019

Several initiatives began, and changes were made to the Emergency Assistance (EA) law in 2019. The department continued to comply with regulatory changes implemented by the State Division of Family Development (DFD). A policy change in early 2019 expanded the period of notice of termination or change to EA benefits from 10 days to 30 days. DFD expanded the Immediate Need Policy for Emergency Assistance recipients in April 2019. The intended recipients of Immediate Need are individuals or families applying for cash assistance and are likely to meet WFNJ eligibility criteria and are lacking shelter or are at imminent risk of lacking shelter. Immediate Need provides temporary services to address this emergency during the pending application period. The changes to the policy expanded the type of assistance provided to include temporary

include temporary services beyond emergency housing, like security deposits, current rent or mortgage, utilities, food and clothing. Another significant change expanded Immediate Need temporary services for the full 30 days of the pending period.

The Immediate Need Policy for Emergency Assistance Recipients was expanded in 2019 to include temporary services beyond emergency housing, such as security deposits, current rent or mortgage payments, utilities, food and clothing.

Emergency Assistance for Specific Groups (EASG), the EA extension program introduced at the end of 2018, continued through 2019. It provides assistance for vulnerable populations, including recipients over age 60, permanently disabled and caregivers for a disabled child or disabled dependent. This extension was approved by law until Feb. 20, 2024.

The EA law also was amended in 2019 to change the 12-month limit of assistance. Entitled the “Emergency Assistance Seven-Year Disregard,” this program allows for EA assistance received prior to more than seven years, from the date of the current EA application, to be disregarded. The disregard of previous EA months allows for additional EA months to be used but not to exceed a cumulative total of 24 months. This program also allows for a case management

option for participants.

Finally, during the last quarter of 2019, the department was involved in planning for the transfer of the Homeless Hotline to the County Board of Social Services as of Jan. 1, 2020.

Investigative Department

The Investigative Department at the Board of Social Services is charged with maintaining the integrity of the programs offered. Investigations are originated as referrals received from TANF, SNAP, Services, Medicaid, Child Support and Paternity (CSP), GA and concerned citizens.

Investigations also are initiated via the monitoring of reports generated from the Middlesex County Adult Correction Center, State prisons, EBT and PARIS matches.

The prison reports help identify active clients who are incarcerated. The information obtained through these reports is used to adjust cases to reflect the true household unit to reduce and/or terminate and close cases. In 2019, 642 cases were reviewed; action was taken on 304.

The EBT Out-of-State Activity Report supplies the Agency with a list of individuals who access their benefits out of the State or County. These instances are investigated in order to validate that New Jersey

and Middlesex County residency exists. When individuals are found to reside out of the State or County, cases are closed and/or referred to the Claims Unit for further action. In 2019, 312 cases were reviewed, and action was taken on 249 cases.

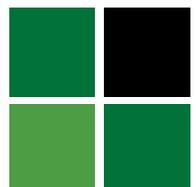
The PARIS Match Report identifies duplication of benefits by cross-referencing information with other states. Cases are investigated and referred for termination, overpayments and disqualifications. Some 160 cases were reviewed in 2019, and action was taken on 52.

In 2019, 1,964 cases were referred to the Investigative Unit, and a total of 1,944 cases were investigated.

Investigative completions resulted in:

- 37 cases being referred for overpayment calculation
- 96 for denial
- 650 for termination
- 40 for reduction in benefits
- 851 were found to have insufficient evidence to substantiate fraud
- 288 had other outcomes

The department also received referrals from the State Food and Nutritional Services program about trafficking of SNAP benefits. A total of \$13,340.34 in benefits was trafficked. Seven intentional Program Violations claims were established, and as a result, \$9,614.33 has been collected.



Over issuances of benefits are referred to the Claims Unit by TANF, GA, SNAP and CSP. In 2019, 657 referrals were received. The Claims Unit reviewed and completed 1,259 claims. A total of 1,528 new claims were established, totaling \$1,319,513.83. The unit also reviews reports from the State, which include NJ Wage Match, Unearned Income, Unemployment Benefits and SSA matches. These matches are used to determine if over-issuances of benefits occurred on unreported income. This may result in case closures, benefit reductions, disqualifications and/or overpayments. Determinations are made as to whether fraud was intentionally committed, and if the case will be referred for an Intentional Program Violation Hearing or to the County Prosecutor's Office for additional action.

Collections are actively pursued through reductions, agreements to repay, judgments, garnishments, and tax intercepts. The Claims Unit additionally monitors any potential resource monies on active WFNJ individuals from other sources such as lawsuit settlements. Potential resources collection for 2019 was \$54,480.00.

Adjunct to the Claims Unit, an investigator is accountable for reviewing the Federal reports detailing the Adult Medicaid recipients with income and resources. During 2019, a total of \$172,079.00 was recovered from improperly paid benefits. In 2019, the department realized savings of

\$398,052.00 by denying, reducing, or terminating assistance. Total revenue collected was \$656,468.00.

Child Support and Paternity

The Child Support and Paternity Program is a federally mandated program available to all County residents. It is administered through the collaborative efforts of the County Boards of Social Services, Probation Departments and Family Courts. Its mission is to ensure that parents meet the responsibility of providing financial and medical support for their children. By establishing and enforcing these obligations, many families in New Jersey are able to receive reliable monetary and medical support.

The main function of the program at the Middlesex County Board of Social Services is to locate absent parents. The Agency offers location services to all custodial parents with dependent children. Services are available to County residents seeking to establish paternity and support for their children for a nominal fee. Public Assistance recipients receive location services and non-support complaints filed on their behalf, free of charge. Location services also are provided for the State Division of Child Protection and Permanency, and non-support complaints are filed on its behalf. Location, filings and

registration services for out-of-state or county cases also are provided as a result of the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA).

Triennial reviews are conducted by the Child Support Program and available to all County residents. Every three years, custodial parents with active orders may seek to have their orders reviewed for possible modification. Custodial parents who wish to seek modification of an existing order can do so by requesting a triennial review.

Cooperation with child support is required for individuals seeking TANF assistance. Applicants are interviewed by Agency CSP staff. Cases are entered into the statewide NJKIDS database, which initiates the automated location process.

Once location is established, staff file non-support complaints with Family Court, requesting support, medical and paternity establishment if necessary. The volume of work completed by Child Support staff in 2019 is as follows:

- 1841 intake interviews
- 214 complaints filed
- 283 triennial requests reviewed
- 481 new NJKIDS cases created

Child Support collections yield substantial reimbursement to the MCBSS. Orders obtained while custodial parents are actively receiving TANF are payable to MCBSS. Any arrears accumulated during the period the custodial parent was active on TANF are owed to

MCBSS. Total child support payments collected in 2019 were \$1,182,587.11.

MCBSS participates in three State committees: Policies Committee, Electronic Management Committee and the County Welfare Agency State Performance Improvement Work Group. The policy group reviews regulations and procedures involving incarcerated, non-custodial parents and recommends changes. The Electronic Management Committee revises and scans new forms into the system for use with NJKIDS 2.0. The CWA State Performance Improvement Work Group develops guides for Boards of Social Services throughout the State. Its focus is on ensuring that practices throughout the state remain uniform and will enhance the overall statistics of the state.

Hope for the Holidays

Each January, many of us take stock of the year just past and look to the new year with hope and anticipation. Some of our neediest clients shared in that anticipation in 2019 thanks to the generous contributions of the Middlesex County Bar Foundation and the New Brunswick Lions Club to the Board of Social Services' Hope for the Holidays program.

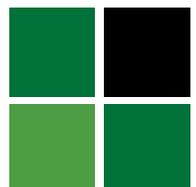
The donations of more than \$12,200 from the Bar Foundation and \$1,100 from the Lions Club through the Needy Cases Fund and the *Home News Tribune* assisted the Board in serving clients in great need, including two U.S. military veterans, who suffer with debilitating mental illness and have lost jobs, homes and support systems. Donations also helped clients diagnosed with various forms of cancer who had to stop working, making it nearly impossible to pay mounting medical bills.

Funds also helped a number of caretakers who are struggling, such as the mother of an autistic 19-year-old man, and a woman who, after retiring early to care for her ailing mother, broke her hip and suffered other medical complications, finding it impossible to seek employment.

While their life circumstances are very different, the one constant is that these and dozens of other clients were given a bit of hope because of the generous donations of the Board's partners. The Board gratefully acknowledges our partners' contributions.

Guide to Acronyms

ABACUS	Automated Budgeting and Claims Updating System	IRS	Internal Revenue Service
ACA	Affordable Care Act	LTC	Long-Term Care Facility
ADA	Americans with Disabilities	MSDS	Material Safety Data Sheets
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children	NJAC	New Jersey Administrative Code
ALF	Assisted Living Facility	NJKIDS	New Jersey Kids Deserve Support
APS	Adult Protective Service	NPA	Non-Public Food Stamps
CMU	Case Management Unit	OMEGA	Online Management of Economic Goals & Achievements
CSP	Child Support and Paternity	OSHA	Occupational Safety & Health Administration
CWA	County Welfare Agency	PARIS	Public Assistance Reporting Information System
DFD	Department of Family Development	RHCF	Residential Health Care Facility
DV	Domestic Violence	SAIF	Supportive Assistance to Individuals and Families
EA	Emergency Assistance	SCHIP	Special Children's Health Insurance Program
EBT	Electronic Benefit Transfer	SSD	Social Security Disability
FAMIS	Family Assistance Management Information System	SSI	Supplemental Security Income
FEDS	Front End Detection System	TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
FVO	Family Violence Option	UAP	Universal Application Process
GA	General Assistance	UIB	Unemployment Insurance Benefits
HMO	Health Maintenance Organization	WFNJ	Work First New Jersey
IEVS	Income Eligibility Verification System		



SUPPORT SERVICES

Human Resources

The Human Resources department supports a work environment in which employees are fully engaged workers, enthusiastic about their job duties and responsibilities. The department manages human resources activities, such as employment and placement, compensation and benefits and labor relations for the Agency. The department coordinates implementation of services, policies and programs through Human Resources staff; reports to the Director and serves on the management team; and assists and advises departmental managers about personnel issues. It is responsible for the recruitment and hiring of new employees and works closely with the Training Department to determine the training needs of the Agency.

The department oversees the administration of employee benefits and coordinates services for its employees with the vendors who provide those services. Benefits include medical insurance, prescription plans, vision care reimbursement, and child care reimbursement; free counseling services through the Employee Assistance Program, 457 Plans, a tuition reimbursement program, Workers' Compensation, Family Medical Leaves and a donated sick

leave program for employees with serious and prolonged illnesses. The department also coordinates services for its retirees, overseeing the administration of their benefits and providing technical assistance and support to ensure a smooth transition from employment to retirement.

Human Resources continues to strive in its quest to remain attentive to employee needs and concerns; promote diversity in the workplace and seek out ways to which the Agency could be improved upon.

Fiscal Department

The Fiscal Department is accountable for MCBSS financial activities and reporting requirements. Its primary responsibility is to maintain the fiscal integrity of the Agency by ensuring all financial transactions are performed timely, accurately and in accordance with established internal controls. The Department also prepares and maintains adequate records to support the Agency's financial statements and to safeguard Agency assets, all while ensuring compliance with State rules and regulations.

The Payroll Unit is responsible for all functions involved in preparing a biweekly payroll. This unit also

offers information and support in the selection process of available benefits and retiree options. The Payroll Unit addresses internal payroll inquiries and external concerns, such as wage garnishments and employment verifications.

The Accounts Receivable Unit records TANF, Medicaid, SNAP and GA reimbursements received from clients for overpayments. To ensure accuracy, the unit works with the Collections unit of the Investigative Department. The Accounts Payable Unit conducts all purchasing functions, monthly reconciliations of all accounts and the issuance all checks.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Department provides a broad array of services to the Agency. The IT Department is the primary liaison to the State of New Jersey for all its end-user applications and computer-related infrastructure. The Agency IT department implements all new State software application rollouts, equipment rollouts and networking changes. The IT staff coordinates all network cabling and network configuration projects, telephone projects, telephone and

data circuit changes, computer software and hardware migration, and computer configuration. The IT department is responsible for the purchase and installation of Agency-owned technology. The department continually updates internal server structure and operating system platforms. These updates keep systems current with the latest computer trends, such as server virtualization utilizing VMWare, and other hardware and software enhancements. These changes ensure the ability to support the latest versions of software, as well as to provide greater fault tolerance and stability in Agency systems.

The State requires county welfare agencies to create and maintain user accounts for all the State systems. The IT department is responsible for the creation and maintenance of more than 3,000 user accounts for the State and local systems. IT staff is responsible for ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate profiles and permissions for the Agency servers and State-sponsored applications required to perform job functions in compliance with Federal, State and local security guidelines. The Agency IT staff must track the State application security and perform periodic audits of these permissions to ensure they are still required. The Agency IT department is responsible for tracking and maintaining the State hardware and network infrastructure. The bulk of the Agency's equipment and

software applications are now Agency-owned. The IT staff works with the State staff and with repair vendors to keep all this equipment in working order. IT configures and maintains 457 workstations, 295 printers and 190 scanners.

The IT staff maintains Agency servers for end-user file storage and to host Agency-specific programs, such as payroll applications and the time and leave system. The servers allow IT staff to create and share in-house tracking databases that supplement the State applications and streamline Agency operations. Agency IT programmers create and support these in-house applications. Multiple database and report redesigns were done in 2019 to support the business process related to the administration of program areas such as TANF, Medicaid, SNAP, GA, EA, and the front desk. These database enhancements provide a more efficient process for tracking and reporting of caseload and worker performance data and facilitate internal reporting coordination of inter-departmental business processes.

The IT department supports several server-based applications, such as the time and leave, ABACUS (Claims calculations), and Accounts Payable, as well as numerous other MIS applications related to payroll and employee administration. IT staff also supports the Human Resources and Payroll system and facilitates user and employee security as well as the Employee Self-Serve System

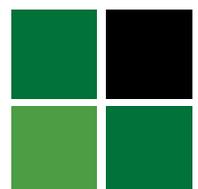
configuration. The department assists vendors in testing and activating their various product installations and updates.

In 2019, the IT department implemented an IP-based telephone system that utilizes a new virtual server environment rather than a physical server, reducing hardware maintenance and costs.

The IT department provides supervisory assistance to the Call Center, as well as handles all technical aspects of the telephone systems, including service, cabling, PBX hardware and software. In 2019, the IT department implemented an IP-based telephone system replacing the Mitel 3300 digital telephone system for 460 telephone extensions and faxes. The IP-based system uses a new virtual server environment rather than a physical server, reducing hardware maintenance and costs.

IT staff handles the telephone directory and system programming responsibilities for all Direct Inward Dial telephone lines, and recorded system announcements.

In addition to the Call Center, the IT staff also maintains an Agency website to provide customers with service-related information, directions to our facilities, and an overview of the various programs administered.



In 2019 the IT department implemented several Green IT projects, initiatives and strategies that reduce the environmental footprint of technology, resulting in reductions in energy use and consumables, such as hardware and electricity. Green IT projects were implemented for ABACUS, Municipal Software and the Guest Pass System server virtualizations.

Administrative Support Department

The Administrative Support Department is a compilation of different units that provide support to the Agency as a whole. These units consist of the Clerical, Mailroom, Front Desk, Case Bank (TANF/GA/SNAP), Medicaid Case Bank (Adult Medicaid/Family Care) and DIMS.

Clerical Unit

This unit coordinates mass mailings and is responsible for maintaining files. Staff schedules or reschedules over 1,400 appointments per month for SNAP and GA. It also scans all copies of recertifications for SNAP and GA into DIMS. It downloads TANF, GA, and SNAP One-App applications, and schedules appointments for all SNAP One-App applications.

In compliance with the National Voter Registration Act, Clerical mails out voter opportunity forms and voter registration applications to all clients that report a change of address. A report from the TANF, GA or NPA Databases is printed

along with instructional letters.

The Clerical Unit was responsible for the mass mailing of over 7,000 SGN letters for December 2019 due to a change in RSDI and SSI.

All EBT cards for clients are issued through Clerical. In 2019, a total of 11,722 EBT cards were issued.

Mailroom Unit

This unit processes all mail, coordinates courier services, and orders and creates forms for all departments. The mailroom processed 389,531 pieces of mail in 2019. In addition to the mail received by the US Postal Service and correspondence placed in the Agency mailbox by clients, emails were created for each program to enable clients to send verification and documents via email.

Front Desk Unit

This unit and continually updates its tracking system in the reception and interviewing areas to decrease wait times. The Front Desk database provides management with client waiting times, interviewing times for individual workers and client traffic throughout the day. Program statistics are generated for all departments in the Agency.

Case Bank and Medicaid Case Bank Units

These units process, enter and assign mail to departments within the Agency. They run various State systems and use Agency databases to ensure that cases are ready to be processed. These units also process One-app online applications.

DIMS Unit

The Document Imaging Management System (DIMS) provides the Agency a system to effectively convert paper records to digital images for storage and retrieval.

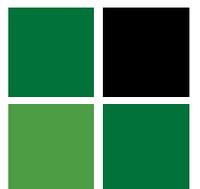
In 2019, the new and current DIMS system increased the speed of scanning and viewing digital documents. Despite maintenance issues and decrease in system performance during the initial rollout and subsequent transition period, 4.7 million documents, containing 15.2 million pages, were scanned. The Middlesex County Board of Social Services continues to be a leader in DIMS and serves as a valuable resource to DFD staff and other county welfare agencies.

Administrative Services

The Department of Administrative Services is responsible for security and building operations. During 2019 all Security Officers and two members of Human Resources were recertified as Emergency Medical Responders.

Renovations to the elevators and the client and employee lobbies were completed by mid-year. Plans to replace the VAV boxes throughout the building are underway. . These boxes are an integral part of the cooling, heating and air flow systems.

In 2019, an average of about 11,000 people entered the building per month.





MIDDLESEX COUNTY

BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Charles E. Tomaro, Deputy Freeholder Director

Kenneth Armwood

Charles Kenny

Leslie Koppel

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