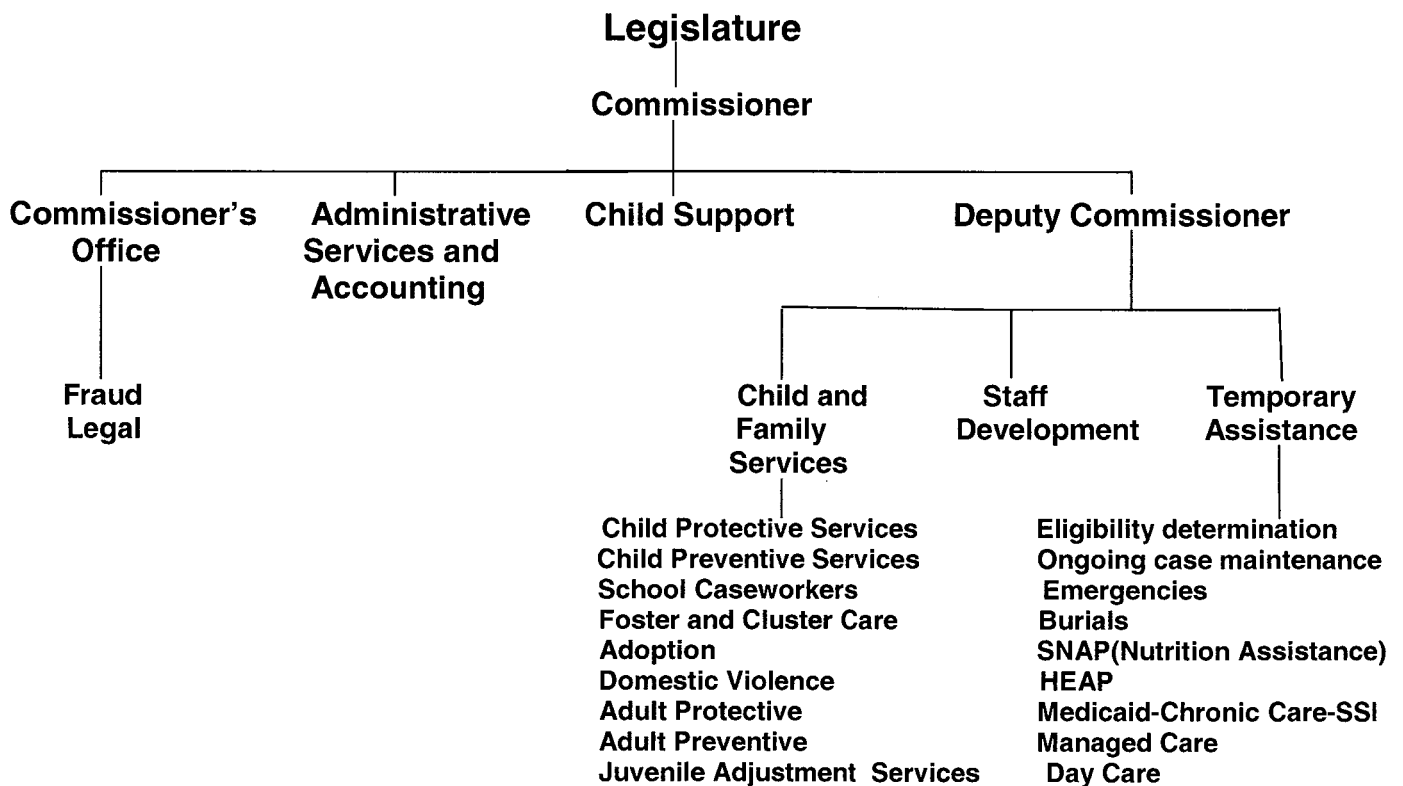




County of Orleans  
**Department of Social Services**  
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THOMAS D. KURYLA  
Commissioner

**2017 Program Budget**  
**Orleans County**  
**Department of Social Services**

**Organizational Chart**



Department Function:

The Orleans County Department of Social Services provides a wide variety of human services and financial assistance to assist families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency and strengthen family life. There are approximately 75 employees in the department. State and federal laws mandate all of our programs and services.

Department of Social Services

Framework

Mission

Our mission is to provide quality services by creating an environment where employees, consumers, and other citizens can interact to motivate individuals to achieve self-sufficiency and strengthen family live.

We recognize the worth of each individual and commit to a work culture based on the dedication, creativity, and talents of our employees.

Purpose

Our purpose is to assist needy individuals in caring for themselves and their families with the best level of assistance and government intervention possible.

All of the programs are state administered, but locally operated. We have three separate state oversight agencies: the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), and the Department of Health (DOH).

Notable Accomplishments in 2016

Our fraud investigators have exhibited consistent progress over the last two years regarding cost avoidance and recoveries, resulting in sizeable savings for Orleans County taxpayers.

	<u>Jan.-Dec.,2014</u>	<u>Jan.-Dec.,2015</u>	<u>Jan-June 2015</u>	<u>Jan- June 2016</u>
<u>Recovery:</u>	\$73,613	\$71,721	\$38,672	\$38,672
<u>Cost Avoidance:</u>	\$1,799,478	\$1,858,816	\$843,442	\$891,024

The above information represents a consistent improvement in communication between our fraud investigator and the Temporary Assistance Department examiners, resulting in an ever increasing amount of Front End Detection Service (FEDS) referrals.

The Child Protective Services staff is consistently ranked in the top 10% of counties in New York State. Over the past twelve months, overdue investigations have averaged approximately 3% - 10%, which is substantially lower than the median of 12% - 17%. We have also had very good success in submitting timely Safety Assessments, averaging between 86% and 95% within the seven-day requirement. The above two statistics represent the ability of our CPS workers to keep children and families safe in Orleans County.

The Preventive Services Unit received approximately 125 referrals in the past 12 months, working with 227 children. Because of their efforts the staff prevents placements of youth into the foster care system, and keeps families together by providing services on a daily basis.

During 2016 the Adult Services staff has received numerous daily referrals. We continue to provide excellent services to clients on a daily basis, especially in the cases of guardianship and representative payee.

With the cooperation and assistance of the safety officer, Building and Grounds, G4S, and the personnel officer, an upgrade and several improvements in our Building Security Policy was developed. Staff training on several occasions was also completed so that familiarity with procedures was reviewed. Several practice drills were utilized regarding both evacuation and lockdown.

The Fraud Unit will (as a result of investigations) increase the amount of recovery by 10% over their estimated 2016 total. Also, they will strive to increase the Front End Detection System (FEDS) cost avoidance by 20% over the 2016 totals. These accomplishments will continue to lower the incidents of welfare fraud in Orleans County as well as saving taxpayer dollars in the meantime.

Our work participation rate for the Family Assistance Program averaged approximately 27% for the year. We have discussed several ways for us to successfully engage our clients in achieving the goal of 50% set for us by New York State. We consistently rank among the top ten performing counties in this category. However, we will continue to improve this statistic until we achieve the desired 50% or higher.

DSS has very strong collaborative relationships with the other county departments and agencies including Probation, (joint state award in 2011), Job Development, Mental Health, Public Health, Nursing Home, District Attorney, Sheriff's Department, and public school systems. This constant communication has served the clients, as well as the community, in a much more thorough and professional manner

The Director of Administrative Services has developed up-to-date spreadsheets, which has drastically improved our ability to predict and evaluate our financial condition. We also have the ability to model various financial scenarios, which is very helpful when reacting to changes in funding/reimbursement. In May of 2015 the unit was strengthened by the addition of an Assistant Director of Administrative Service.

## Key 2017 Goals

Our Family Assistance and Employment Program staff will work together and concentrate on participating clients to increase the TANF recipient work participation rate toward the 50% goal for all families, while also working to reduce the current number of public assistance cases.

The Foster Care Unit will lower our total foster care children below 25 children through more intense Preventive Services and collaboration with the agencies within Orleans County. Also, the Preventive Services Unit will continue their progress in preventing out of home placement in at least 90% of the cases for which they provide preventive services during 2017.

The Child Protective Services Unit will complete 95% of all 7-day safety assessments within that timeframe. Also, they will complete 90% of all CPS investigations within the 60-day limit for submission and approval. The average caseload size per worker will be within the recommended (15) maximum throughout 2017.

The Adult Services Unit will complete 95% of their PSA investigations within the 60-day timeframe.

Safety and security practices will be evaluated and revisited and staff training conducted as significant staff turnover has occurred in the last 18 months. This will include a review of both field and office practices with special attention to the already existing evacuation and lockdown procedures in the event of a major building incident.

In the last 60 months we have, through consolidation or abolishment, trimmed our department by 10 - 12 positions. This has resulted in more staff efficiency and increased production. We will continue to monitor staff production so that future vacancies/refills are evaluated for necessity.

## Children, Family, and Adult Services

### DEPARTMENT PURPOSE

The department provides a variety of services, which focus on improving individual and family functioning as well as helping neglected, abused or delinquent children. The main principle is to provide care, assistance, and intervention in the least restrictive ways. We provide various services directed toward families and children including child protective, foster and cluster care, adoption, preventive, types of child day care, and several institutional programs. Also, substantial numbers of adults in our community require specialized care and protection. We are also expected with providing protective services to individuals over the age of 18. Caseworkers no longer perform case management for Medicaid supported home care, due to the fact that the NYS has steadily assumed responsibility for this role.

### Performance Indicators

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016 (estimated)</u>
<u>Child Protective Reports</u>	641	654	740
<u>Preventive Services Caseload</u>	148	147	146
<u>Adult Protective Investigations</u>	44	42	38
<u>Long-term Managed Care Caseload</u>	53	n/a	n/a
<u>Adult Preventive Caseload</u>	17	16	15

## Temporary Assistance

### DEPARTMENT PURPOSE

The Orleans County Temporary Assistance Unit determines eligibility of applicants and maintains the cases for recipients of the work support programs of Cash Assistance, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program formerly known as 'Food Stamps'), Medicaid and HEAP. Directives and oversight are provided by the Department of Health and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. The objective of these work support programs is to enable families to become self-sufficient. This requires collaboration amongst various other county agencies including Job Development, Mental Health and GCASA, whose expertise is relied upon in assisting recipients to overcome barriers to self-sufficiency. Eligibility requirements vary from program to program.

Applicants for Cash Assistance are sent to Orleans County Job Development, where staff assess the skill levels of recipients and funnel them into work activities or skill development programs provided by Orleans-Niagara BOCES. Some applicants may be determined work exempt for reasons such as primary caregiver of a household member, medical conditions, or substance abuse issues, in which case they must comply with GCASA recommendations to remain eligible. Should an applicant be deemed unable to work due to medical reasons, the Department makes a referral for them to Office for the Aging who assists in submitting an application to Social Security for a disability determination.

The Department also provides emergency, one-time only payments, to forestall evictions and utility shut-offs. Under certain situations property liens or repayment agreements can be put in place to recover such expenditures. DSS also covers the cost of indigent burials, shelter costs for victims of Domestic Violence, and temporary housing expenses for homeless singles and families. Homeless individuals placed on an emergency basis in temporary housing are required to sign a statement of responsibility for damage to the domicile. In order to qualify for housing assistance they are required to follow an individualized Independent Living Plan which requires that they actively seek permanent housing and report regularly to the Department.

The Temporary Assistance unit also determines eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Applications for SNAP are submitted in person, by mail or via myBenefits, the NYS internet site. All applicants are subject to a telephone interview if they are not applying in person.. All SNAP applications require immediate attention as a determination for emergency food stamps eligibility must be made within 5 days.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is administered by the Temporary Assistance Unit. SNAP and Cash Assistance recipients are automatically eligible to receive the HEAP benefit. Subsequent emergency benefits for that population are issued separately as appropriate. Office for the Aging is responsible for assisting the aged population in the application process for HEAP. First time applicants must appear for a face-to-face interview, while recipients from the previous year can apply by mail. HEAP applications can also be filed through the myBenefits website. Benefit amounts vary from year to year, based on the amounts allotted by the Federal government. The NYS HEAP bureau also runs a cooling component during the summer months providing very limited funding for recipients of heating HEAP with documentation of medical necessity. The state funded the Heating Equipment Repair and Replacement program for 2015/2016 HEAP season which benefited the local district as otherwise, DSS would have been required to assist eligible applicants under the Emergency Assistance Program resulting in local cost. Brought back for 2016 is the Clean and Tune program which pays for routine maintenance to HEAP eligible applicants.

The Day Care Assistance subsidy program is regulated by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. Eligibility for the subsidy is determined by a Social Welfare Examiner. The day care subsidy is income driven with parents paying anywhere from 0% to 35% of the actual cost of day care. Some child care providers, such as actual Day Care Centers, are licensed by the Office of Children and Family

Services. Informal providers, such as family relatives or friends, are approved by a local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency operated by Community Action of Orleans and Genesee. Besides determining eligibility, the Social Welfare Examiner is responsible for maintaining the billing database and facilitating the billing procedure, and acting as a liaison with CCR&R. In order to prevent overpayments and fraud, the examiner periodically contacts providers to verify hours of care provided, and employers to verify recipient work schedules. The certification period is 6 months which allows for increased ability to prevent large overpayments due to unreported changes in circumstance.

Applicants can be subject to a fraud investigation if information garnered through application/documentation/interview seems questionable. The state and feds periodically provide reports of recipients who appear on the rolls of a NYS correctional facility, or on the assistance rolls in another state. The Fraud Investigator is responsible to confirm the whereabouts of the recipient and pursue recovery of funds and/or legal action as appropriate. The Fraud Hotline and the examiners also contribute to a steady stream of referrals to the Fraud Investigator. In addition, the Fraud Investigator does an initial inspection of all temporary housing and also does periodic unscheduled visits to ensure that no one other than those authorized to occupy the temporary housing location are on the premises. Other duties include scrutiny of day care recipients and providers, 'sanctioned beyond duration' cash assistance recipients and monitoring of safety net recipients. The safety net population continues to grow, which results in increasing expenditures of local tax dollars. The intention is for the Investigator to thoroughly examine the applicants' economic situation to ensure that cash assistance is indeed the only available option and is warranted. In addition, the Fraud Investigator will regularly monitor safety net recipients to ensure that work exemptions for medical or other reasons are granted for the shortest possible duration.

One final note, over 11,000 individuals in Orleans County are in receipt of some sort of financial assistance (Medicaid, SNAP, Cash Assistance and HEAP) each month and their cases are maintained by staff of the TA unit.

## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

In 2015 our staff of Social Welfare Examiners conducted 2407 face to face interviews for applicants of cash, emergencies, SNAP and Medicaid, an average of 200 interviews per month. Of the total, 46% were for cash assistance, 39% were for SNAP and/or Medicaid and 15% were for emergencies. Through June of 2016 the staff has conducted 1064 face-to-face interviews, an average of 177 per month. Of that total, approximately 54% were for cash assistance, 31% were for SNAP and/or Medicaid and 15% were for emergency benefits..

As of June 2016, the average number of Cash Assistance cases open per month is 613, which is a decrease of 5% from the average number of cases open per month for the same time period in 2015. While the number of Safety Net (single individuals, childless couples, individuals who have exceeded the 60 month limit, families of individuals abusing drugs or alcohol or refusing treatment) recipients continues to outnumber the recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, it is encouraging to note that the average number of Safety Net cases open per month for the first 6 months of 2016 is nearly 5% lower than the average number of open cases in that category for the first 6 months of 2015. On a similar note, the average number of Family Assistance cases open per month through June of 2016 is down by 6% from the monthly average for the same time period in 2015..

The number of SNAP recipients from January through June 2016 averaged 2690 per month, down 2% from the average per month from January through June 2015. In 2015 a total of 724 SNAP applications were filed online, a decrease of 11% over the number filed in 2014. Through the end of June 2016 the SNAP unit has processed 278 online SNAP applications..

HEAP season started on November 16, 2015 and ended on April 8, 2016. The number of regular HEAP benefits paid out in the 2015/2016 HEAP season (3038) was 340 less (around 10%) than in the previous

season. There was a significant decrease (43%) in the number of emergency benefits paid out. The two seasonal HEAP workers processed 1384 applications (down 16%) for regular HEAP and 617 applications (down 43%) for emergency HEAP during the 2015/2016 season. The weather was much milder than normal which may account for the significant decreases in activity. The cooling program was funded for the 2015 cooling season which funded room air conditioners for 23 HEAP recipients. The HEAP Bureau also allotted funding for the cooling program in 2016 and reinstated the furnace clean and tune program that had not been funded since 2009.

The Day Care unit consists solely of one Social Welfare Examiner under the direct supervision of a Senior Social Welfare Examiner in the Temporary Assistance unit. The examiner has mastered the use of the Child Care Time and Attendance System (CCTA) which was mandated by the state in 2011 and monitors child care hours and payments to local child care providers. It has improved the recruitment and retention of child care providers in Orleans County, as well as increasing fiscal accountability and tracking on a monthly basis. It has also lessened the burden of manual processes on both staff and child care providers. The day care caseload has remained fairly stable from 2015 through June 2016, with an average of just over 100 children per month receiving child care subsidies.

### Performance Indicators

	2015	2016 through June
FA (average open cases/month)	276	264
SN (average open cases/month)	356	350
SNAP (average open cases/month)	2705	2690
SNAP online applications processed	724	278
HEAP (Regular Benefits)	3378 *	3038**
HEAP (Emergency Benefits)	1081*	617**
HEAP Cooling program	23*	51**
HEAP (Furnace replace or repair)	20*	16**
Burials (approved applications)	33	23
DV (shelter payments)	10	5
Day care (Avg open TA and Non-TA cases/month)	105	102
Images scanned into I/EDR	426,869	157,219

\* 2014/2015 season

\*\*2015/2016 season

## Medical Assistance

### DEPARTMENT PURPOSE

Prior to the enactment of the Affordable Care Act in 2013, the Medical Assistance unit was the sole entity responsible to determine eligibility for, and maintain cases of, recipients of a variety of government subsidized health insurance benefit plans, under the nameplate of 'Medicaid'. For individuals meeting eligibility criteria, Medicaid pays for inpatient and outpatient medical bills, Medicare Part A, B and D premiums, reimbursement to employees for their portion of employer sponsored health insurance policies, family planning, and transportation costs to medical appointments.

Orleans County is a mandatory Managed Care county meaning that, with a few exceptions (carve-outs), Medicaid eligible recipients must enroll in one of the participating HMO type plans: Fidelis, Excellus, or Healthnow, NY. The plans charge Medicaid a set premium amount per individual each month, and the medical providers then bill the plans directly. The NYS Medicaid Redesign plan calls for more of the carve-outs to fall under the managed care umbrella. In 2014 the foster care children were mandated to enroll in a plan. Since January, 2015, recipients of Long Term Home Care (individuals who meet the medical criteria for skilled nursing care but remain in the home with nursing and aide services), have been required to enroll in a managed care plan. The three plans that have signed on to service Orleans County long term care clients are iCircle, VNA and Fidelis.

Many challenges have continued into 2016 associated with the implementation of the New York State of Health Insurance Exchange. During 2014 and 2015, many of the Medicaid Social Welfare Examiners served as Certified Application Counselors to assist applicants in applying for coverage through the exchange. This practice was discontinued in late 2015 due to staff reductions. Presently, NYSOH determines eligibility and maintains cases for a specific category of applicants. Any application which does not meet the criteria is sent to the local district, and there continues to be a multitude of frustrating unintended consequences which create havoc with the daily operations of the Medicaid unit. In 2015 the average number of new applications processed by the Medicaid examiners was 73 per month. So far in 2016 that number has decreased by 5% to an average of 69 applications per month.

At present, all Medicaid cases that were opened at the district are still being maintained by the district. On June 30, 2015, the Medicaid caseload was 4,336. As of June 30, 2016, the caseload is 4,114, a decrease of 5% from the caseload in June 2015. NYS plans to gradually assume responsibility for majority of these cases as they come due for recertification month by month. The target date for this change has been extended, yet again, into February of 2017 and if that target is met, by February of 2018 we expect over half of the caseload to be transferred to NYSDOH. Once the transition is complete, we expect to continue to be responsible for processing applications for the Chronic Care (nursing home) population even beyond 2018, along with some other categories which require detailed eligibility determinations.

### MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The county's share to fund Medicaid accounts for the largest single expenditure in the DSS budget. Although there is a cap instituted on the amount the county must contribute to these costs, each year the expenditures increase by 3% over the previous year. The county will continue to pay to fund Medicaid for those who are not eligible for a Qualified Health Insurance Plan through the New York State of Health.



# CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AND COLLECTION

## DEPARTMENT PURPOSE

The Child Support Unit has the responsibility for making sure that non-custodial parents contribute to the support of their dependent children up to the age of 21. This helps with the ultimate goal of Temporary Assistance by helping the custodial parents become self-sufficient, in part through the establishment and collection of child support orders. The first step is in determining if paternity has been established and if not, work with the parents and if necessary the court to establish it. Next, we help the custodial parent establish a child support order through the Court system pursuant to the Child Support Standards Act (CSSA) guidelines. In Non-TANF cases, we then collect the support and distribute it to the family. For TANF cases, we collect the support and distribute a portion of it to the family, and the remainder helps to offset the costs of the public assistance grant. All orders must include a provision for medical insurance if it is available at a reasonable cost as determined by the court. This helps limit the costs that are expended by the Medicaid program. For children that are in Foster Care or Institutionalized, the support is collected to help offset the cost of care for them. Our accounting portion of the unit handles the collections, disbursements and adjustments to the accounts based on the Court Orders.

## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

At the current pace for this year, our total collections are projected to be about the same as last year however our Title IV-E collections have increased substantially between 2014 and 2015 and they continue to remain at that increased level for 2016. Considering our economic times, that is quite an accomplishment. Our average monthly caseloads for Family Assistance cases have increased about 10% while the non-Family Assistance cases have stayed the same. Our statistics show that we are well above the state average in all areas and we are continuing to surpass most of the federal performance standards. Child Support Enforcement is one part of successful welfare reform. It helps to be sure that non-custodial parents are held accountable to support their children which in turn limits the amount of public assistance is required to meet their needs. Establishing and enforcing health insurance provisions of the child support order helps to limit the amount of Medicaid that gets expended. As you can see, the paternities established in the first six (6) months of 2016 exceed the total established for all of 2015. The new orders established are also projected to exceed the number in 2015.

## COLLECTIONS

	<u>2015</u>	<u>Jan – Jun 2016</u>
Family Assistance	\$ 1,415,341.10	\$ 703,497.95
Non- Family Assistance	\$ 1,345,149.31	\$ 621,779.25
Foster Care (Title IV-E and others)	\$ 22,218.86	\$ 11,118.40
Medical Reimbursement	<u>\$ 1,499,512.91</u>	<u>\$ 773,885.28</u>
<b>TOTAL COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>\$ 4,282,222.18</b>	<b>\$ 2,110,280.88</b>

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

	<u>2015</u>	<u>Jan – Jun 2016</u>
Average monthly FA and FC Caseload	442	487
Average monthly non-FA caseload	1983	1983
New paternities established	58	83
New orders established	139	81

### Statistics

	<u>Orleans</u>	<u>Jun-16</u> <u>Statewide</u>
Paternity Established	96.35%	89.04%
Support Established	88.44%	84.57%
Current Support Collected	69.69%	65.69%
Arrears Collected	59.99%	53.77%
Cases with Health Insurance Ordered	76.91%	53.77%

8/17/16