Social Services

APPROVED FY27 BUDGET	FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS
$77,020,184	501.80

JAMES BRIDGERS PH.D., MBA, DIRECTOR

FUNCTION

The mission of Social Services is to promote the well-being, safety, and self-sufficiency of Montgomery County residents through equitable access to social support services. This mission is realized through the provision of protection, prevention, intervention, treatment, support services, and financial assistance for vulnerable children and families. These services work to build on the strengths of individuals, families, and the community in addressing health needs, abuse, neglect, and economic insecurities.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Oscar Mensah Ph.D. of the HHS - Social Services at 240-777-3850 or Deborah Lambert of the Office of Management and Budget at 240-777-2794 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Admin - Social Services Office

The Social Services Administrative Unit provides strategic leadership and centralized operational support for all Social Services programs within the Department of Health and Human Services. Under the direction of the Social Services Officer, the Administrative Unit ensures strong fiscal management, staffing oversight, and compliance with House Bill 669 (HB669) grant requirements, while coordinating closely with the Maryland Department of Human Services. The unit provides direct oversight of the Office of Eligibility and Support Services (OESS), Child Welfare Services, and Constituent Services, and establishes funding, policy, and regulatory authority for Adult Services, Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP), and Emergency Assistance to Families and Children (EAFC). This centralized approach promotes consistent operations, accurate reporting, and alignment with State and County priorities. Through its work, the unit strengthens program performance, enhances service delivery, and maintains the infrastructure necessary to provide effective, equitable support to Montgomery County residents.

FY27 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY26 Approved	**0**	**0.00**
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	770,074	5.00
FY27 Approved	**770,074**	**5.00**

Child Welfare Services

Child Welfare Services is a continuum of services designed to ensure that children are safe and that families have the support they need to care for their children successfully. The system is guided by three main principles of safety, permanency, and well-being. This program provides protective and supportive services for children who are maltreated and their families. Services include: screening, assessment and investigation of allegations of child abuse and neglect; in-home/family preservation services to families with children who are at risk of removal from the home due to abuse/neglect; and foster/kinship care for children/youth when they cannot safely remain in the home. The focus is on reunification services or finding alternative, permanent living arrangements (custody/guardianship or adoption) when children are removed from the home. Case management and support services are offered to older youth who age out of foster care. Supportive and monitoring services, along with financial stipends, are offered to licensed foster parents. These services are provided by the County on behalf of the State of Maryland Department of Human Services.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY24	Actual FY25	Estimated FY26	Target FY27	Target FY28
Number of children served in foster care [1]	444	439	473	458	453
Number of families receiving in-home services [2]	240	200	244	236	230
Number of newly accepted cases (IR, AR, and non-CPS) [3]	2,457	2,418	2,506	2,559	2,524
Percent of children placed in family settings [4]	75%	74%	76%	76%	76%
Percent of children receiving in-home services that do not have a child protective service investigation with an abuse or neglect finding within one year after receiving services [5]	96%	83%	93%	93%	91%

[1] *Numbers reflect total number of children served in foster care during the fiscal year. The decrease in children served in foster care is attributed to enhanced efforts to involve relatives and kin throughout the life of the case which shortens involvement with child welfare. Projections are based on a five-year historical average.*

[2] *Numbers reflect the total number of families receiving in-home family preservation services during the fiscal year. The 17% decrease in the number of families receiving services from FY24 to FY25 can be attributed to fewer cases being referred by Child Protective Services due to their greater clinical complexity and needs. Additionally, as Family Preservation Services are voluntary, a family may deny or refuse services despite the encouragement of Child Welfare Services. Projections are based on a five-year historical average.*

[3] *The data reflect the total number of newly accepted investigation (IR), alternative response (AR), and non-Child Protective Services (non-CPS) cases during the fiscal year. Projections are based on a five-year historical average.*

[4] *The percentage reflects the annual average of children placed in a family-based setting at the end of each month while in out-of-home care. Family-based settings include: regular foster, kinship, private treatment foster care, pre-adoptive homes, and trial home visits. The slight decrease from FY24 to FY25 can be attributed to an increase in the number of children and youth achieving permanency through reunification, adoption, or custody and guardianship, all exit types which require children to be placed in family-based settings prior to exiting out-of-home care. Projections based on a five-year historical average.*

[5] *This metric reflects how many children had a positive outcome after their engagement with Family Preservation Services (i.e., the children did not have a case that found probable maltreatment within 12 months of ending service). This metric dropped between FY24 and FY25 because the number of children whose case found probable maltreatment increased from 7 in FY24 to 32 in FY25. Each child in a family is counted individually, so cases with families with above-average numbers of children may skew this metric. Projections based on a five-year historical average.*

FY27 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY26 Approved	**0**	**0.00**
Shift: Two Contractors to Provide MCPS Protective Service Clearances	160,000	0.00
Eliminate: Crisis Stabilization Services for Child Welfare Services Due to Expiration of Contract	(56,359)	0.00
Eliminate: Youth Mentoring Services Non-Competitive Contract and Transition Participants to Another Community Provider if Appropriate and Available	(141,469)	0.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	36,165,688	209.94
FY27 Approved	**36,127,860**	**209.94**

Office of Eligibility and Support Services

The Office of Eligibility and Support Services (OESS) serves low-income families and individuals facing significant challenges in meeting basic needs by determining eligibility for crucial support services and assistance to help County residents attain self-sufficiency. Eligibility determination is for food, cash, and medical coverage for the following programs: Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA); Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP); Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-formerly known as Food Stamps); Medical Assistance for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (including long-term care); and the Affordable Care Act, which includes Community Medical Assistance, Maryland Children's Health Program, Medical Assistance for Families and Children, and Refugee Medical Assistance. OESS provides these services on behalf of the State of Maryland Department of Human Services, the Maryland Department of Health, and the Maryland Health Benefits Exchange. In addition, OESS determines eligibility for the County's healthcare for the uninsured services (Care for Kids and Senior Dental Program). OESS strives to provide the highest level of customer service and maintain a "no wrong door" approach to service delivery.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY24	Actual FY25	Estimated FY26	Target FY27	Target FY28
Number of food stamps (SNAP) applications approved [1]	19,305	20,686	21,000	21,000	21,000
Number of Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) job seekers that entered unsubsidized employment YTD [2]	508	468	531	531	531
Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) job retention rate 90 days [3]	96%	96%	95%	95%	95%

[1] *The number of applications approved is expected to remain relatively stable, given they have been around 21,000 for two of the past three fiscal years. The increase between FY24 and FY25 seems to be a return to the historical average.*

[2] *The number reported is the point-in-time count of job seekers entering unsubsidized employment and is subject to change at any time. As such, retroactive changes are unpredictable and numbers may change significantly. The State of Maryland has assigned an annual target for FY26 which is 531. Therefore, the FY26-28 projections are based on the state-assigned targets.*

[3] *This metric reflects the average monthly job retention rate from July to June. The projections are based on prior years' performance, which are above the current contractual benchmark of 85%.*

FY27 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY26 Approved	**0**	**0.00**
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	39,493,891	282.86
FY27 Approved	**39,493,891**	**282.86**

Social Services Constituent Services and Quality Assurance

The Constituent Services Unit serves as the primary operational and analytical arm of the Social Services Office for escalated constituent matters. Guided by core values of equity, responsiveness, effectiveness, and collaboration, the unit ensures that all residents experience a respectful and inclusive environment when seeking assistance. The unit manages escalated inquiries within a mandated 48 business-hour timeframe, collects and analyzes program data to inform strategic decision-making, oversees quality assurance activities to support compliance with internal and external requirements, and leads cross-departmental projects aimed at improving service delivery and addressing systemic barriers. Additionally, the unit provides financial monitoring support aligned with strategic priorities for internal and external stakeholders. Through these functions, the Constituent Services Unit advances consistent, data-driven, and equitable customer service for all constituents.

FY27 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY26 Approved	**0**	**0.00**
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	628,359	4.00
FY27 Approved	**628,359**	**4.00**

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Name	FY26 APPR Expenditures	FY26 APPR FTEs	FY27 APPR Expenditures	FY27 APPR FTEs
Admin - Social Services Office	0	0.00	770,074	5.00
Child Welfare Services	34,509,147	210.90	36,127,860	209.94
Office of Eligibility and Support Services	45,646,819	283.10	39,493,891	282.86
Social Services Constituent Services and Quality Assurance	0	0.00	628,359	4.00
Total	**80,155,966**	**494.00**	**77,020,184**	**501.80**