Department of Social Services - Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Review Summary

Proposed FY 2023 Operating Budget

Expenditures by Fund Type

Fund	FY 2021 Approved	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Proposed	$ Change	% Change
General Fund	$ 5,920,900	$ 5,739,208	$ 6,341,200	$ 5,874,900	$ 6,286,700	$ (54,500)	-0.9%
Grants	22,282,300	12,678,123	16,986,700	14,293,600	19,582,800	$ 2,596,100	15.3%
Total	**$ 28,203,200**	**$ 18,417,331**	**$ 23,327,900**	**$ 20,168,500**	**$ 25,869,500**	**$ 2,541,600**	**10.9%**

Greneral Fund	FY 2021 Approved	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	% Change
Compensation	$ 2,575,400	$ 1,400,038	$ 2,877,200	$ 2,293,600	$ 2,843,900	$ (33,300)	-1.2%
Fringe Benefits	592,200	438,761	661,800	642,200	725,700	$ 63,900	9.7%
Operating Expenses	2,963,100	3,900,409	3,177,600	2,939,100	3,092,500	$ (85,100)	-2.7%
Recoveries	(209,800)	-	(375,400)	-	(375,400)	$ -	NA
Total	**$ 5,920,900**	**$ 5,739,208**	**$ 6,341,200**	**$ 5,874,900**	**$ 6,286,700**	**$ (54,500)**	**-0.9%**

Grant Funds	FY 2021 Approved	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	% Change
Compensation	$ 11,268,400	$ 5,431,263	$ 8,092,000	$ 5,376,300	$ 7,980,400	$ (111,600)	-1.4%
Fringe Benefits	1,723,900	644,860	1,213,800	821,100	1,197,100	$ (16,700)	-1.4%
Operating Expenses	10,037,000	6,847,444	8,423,900	8,353,200	11,145,900	$ 2,722,000	32.3%
Total	**$ 23,029,300**	**$ 12,923,567**	**$ 17,729,700**	**$ 14,550,600**	**$ 20,323,400**	**$ 2,593,700**	**14.6%**

Staffing

Fund	FY 2021 Authorized	FY 2022 Authorized	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Proposed	Change	% Change	Vacancy Rate
General Fund	27	27	*16*	27	0	0.0%	*40.7%*
Grants	229	229	*116*	229	0	0.0%	*49.3%*
Total	**256**	**256**	***132***	**256**	**0**	**0.0%**	***48.4%***

FY 2023 Proposed Budget – Key Highlights

- The Department of Social Services is a quasi-State agency with the funding being provided by the State and the County. For the County's portion, the proposed budget is 76% grant funded and 24% funded via the General Fund.
- The Proposed Budget represents a net 11% increase from FY 2022 Approved Budget, or 28% increase from FY 2022 estimated level of expenditures.
  - Grant funded portion of the Proposed Budget includes $706,400 in reductions of existing programs and services.
  - Key changes in the General Fund portion of the budget includes a $54,500 net decrease. This change is driven by decreases in operating costs and compensation, which are partially offset by increases in compensation fringe benefits.
- No changes in authorized positions are proposed for FY 2023.
- As of the end of March 2022, the Department had a 41% General Fund full-time civilian vacancy rate, and 49% Grant Funded vacancy rate (vast majority of grant funded positions are limited term). The State vacancy rate is 25%. The Department has a total of 236 vacant positions, compared to 190 vacant positions reported a year ago.
- The Department anticipates that reverting of key benefit programs to their "pre-COVID-19 levels". The reinstatement of recertification processes will result in the exit of many households from the needed assistance. The COVID-19 Non-Congregate Shelter is being phased out.

- The Department is working to develop a new *Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, which is anticipated to be completed in early FY 2023.

Proposed FY 2023 -FY 2028 Capital Improvement Program

- The Department of Social Services does not have its own CIP projects, however the Regional Health and Human Services Center project included in the Health Department's CIP budget involves the Department of Social Services because it will co-locate the Department of Social Services, the Health Department, and the Department of Family Services into a single location.
- Based on the most recent update, the Regional Health and Human Services Center will not be completed in FY 2022 and is expected to be completed in Summer of 2023. It will be located at 8800 Hampton Mall Drive in Capitol Heights.

	Expended thru FY22	Proposed FY23 Capital Budget	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	Total Proposed CIP Funding
Regional Health and Human Services Center (Health Dept)	$ 57,250,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 57,250,000

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of Audits and Investigations

April 21, 2022

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Sydney J. Harrison, Chair
Health, Human Services and Public Safety Committee

THRU: Turkessa M. Green, County Auditor
Joseph R. Hamlin, Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: Anya Makarova, Senior Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Department of Social Services
Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Review

Budget Overview

- The County funding included in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget for the Department of Social Services is $25,869,500, representing a $2,541,600 increase, or 10.9% above the FY 2022 Approved Budget.

- Changes in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget are driven by a $2.6 million (15.3%) increase in grant funds, and a $54,500 (0.9%) reduction in the General Fund, resulting in a net $2.5 million (10.9%) increase in the total proposed budget when compared to the FY 2022 authorized budget level.

- Accounting for $19.6 million out of the total proposed budget of $25.9 million, 76% of the County's portion of the Department's budget is anticipated to be grant funded. This represents an increase in the proportion of grant funds from FY 2022 budget.

- Actual Fiscal Year 2021 to Proposed Fiscal Year 2023:

Fund	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	% Change - Est vs App	FY 2023 Proposed	$ Change, Prop vs App	% Change
General Fund	$ 5,739,208	$ 6,341,200	$ 5,874,900	-7.4%	$ 6,286,700	$ (54,500)	-0.9%
Grants	12,678,123	16,986,700	14,293,600	-15.9%	19,582,800	2,596,100	15.3%
Total	**$ 18,417,331**	**$ 23,327,900**	**$ 20,168,500**	**-13.5%**	**$ 25,869,500**	**$ 2,541,600**	**10.9%**

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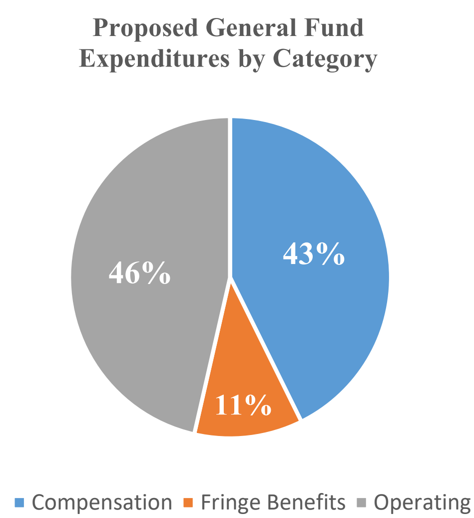
Budget Comparison – General Fund

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change (Approved Budget)	Percentage Change (Estimated Budget)
Compensation	$ 1,400,038	$ 2,877,200	$ 2,293,600	$ 2,843,900	$ (33,300)	-1.2%	24.0%
Fringe Benefits	438,761	661,800	642,200	725,700	63,900	9.7%	13.0%
Operating Expenses	3,900,409	3,177,600	2,939,100	3,092,500	(85,100)	-2.7%	5.2%
Subtotal	$ 5,739,208	$ 6,716,600	$ 5,874,900	$ 6,662,100	$ (54,500)	-0.8%	13.4%
Recoveries	-	(375,400)	-	(375,400)	-	0.0%	100.0%
Total	$ 5,739,208	$ 6,341,200	$ 5,874,900	$ 6,286,700	$ (54,500)	-0.9%	7.0%

- Not accounting for the recoveries, the Department's General Fund proposed spending is comprised of 43% of funds allocated for compensation, 11% allocated for fringe expenditures and the remaining 46% allocated for operational expenses.



Compensation

- In FY 2023, General Fund compensation expenditures are budgeted at $2,843,900, representing a decrease of $33,300, or 1.2%, below the FY 2022 Approved Budget. The changes are driven by an increase in the budgeted salary attrition as well as decrease in the County contribution for the Office of Strategic Partnerships and Community Solutions grant.

- In FY 2023, the authorized General Fund staff complement is proposed to remain at the FY 2022 authorized level of 27 full-time civilian positions.

General Fund Authorized Staffing Count

	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
Full-Time Civilian	27	27	0	0.0%
Total	**27**	**27**	**0**	**0.0%**

Fringe Benefits

Fringe Benefits Historical Trend

	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Budget	FY 2022 Estimated	FY 2023 Proposed
Compensation	$ 1,400,038	$ 2,877,200	$ 2,293,600	$ 2,843,900
Fringe Benefits Expenditures	$ 438,761	$ 661,800	$ 642,200	$ 725,700
As a % of Compensation	31.3%	23.0%	28.0%	25.5%

- In FY 2023 fringe benefits expenditures are proposed to increase by $63,900, or 9.7%, above the FY 2022 approved budget level (or 13.0% above the FY 2022 estimated level of expenditures).

Operating Expenses

- The FY 2023 General Fund operating expenditures are proposed to decrease by $85,100, or 2.7%, below the FY 2022 approved budget level (or 5.2% increase from the FY 2022 estimated level of expenditures).

- A comprehensive list of proposed operating expenses is provided in response to the *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Question No. 28*.
  - The most significant increases are proposed for the Office Automation category ($18,300) to reflect the cost of Office of Information Technology charges and Operating Contracts ($9,600).
  - Categories with the greatest proposed spending reductions include Office/Building Rental/Lease ($56,600) due to reallocation of costs to the Operating Contracts category and General Office Supplies ($52,900).

- A list of the Department's contracts is included in Attachment E of the *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Responses.* The proposed budget includes $100,000 to support consultant services for the Food Equity and Food Insecurity Taskforce.

Recoveries

- The FY 2023 recoveries are proposed at $375,400, which represents no change from the FY 2022 approved budget level. Recoveries are used to recover compensation and fringe benefit expenditures for four (4) grant funded positions.

Grants

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2022 Estimated	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
Compensation	$5,431,263	$8,092,000	$5,376,300	$7,980,400	-$111,600	-1.4%
Fringe Benefits	644,860	1,213,800	821,100	1,197,100	-16,700	-1.4%
Operating Expenses	6,847,444	8,423,900	8,353,200	11,145,900	2,722,000	32.3%
Total	$12,923,567	$17,729,700	$14,550,600	$20,323,400	$2,593,700	14.6%

- In FY 2022 the Department is estimated to spend $14.6 million in grant funds, which represents 82.1% of the FY 2022 Approved Grant Funds budget of $17.7 million. The Department reports that reduced grant funds spending is primarily attributed to the shift of the Community Schools Network program to the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) in response to Kirwan legislation. To avoid any reductions in services, the funding, staffing and responsibility for service provision were transferred to the school system, while the Department will focus on providing crisis intervention services (Crisis Intervention Public Schools program). Additional information on the FY 2022 estimated level of grant funds is available in Attachment A of the responses to the *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Questions*.

- The Department reports that it "did not return grant funding in FY 2021" and does not anticipate returning any funds in FY 2022 despite having a 49.3% vacancy rate for grant funded positions. During the Staff Review the Department noted that it is commonly asking for grant extensions and requests to transfer funds from compensation to operating category in order to execute grant funded initiatives.

- The Proposed FY 2023 $19.6 million Grant Funds Budget represents 75.7% of the Department's overall County's budget. Grant funds budget includes $740,600 in County contribution/cash match funds for a total budget of $20.3 million.

- The $20.3 million in grant funds proposed in FY 2023 represents a 14.6% increase from the approved FY 2022 level, or a 39.7% increase from the FY 2022 estimated level of grant expenditures.

- Out of 25 grant funded programs included in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget, the following seven (7) have the largest budgets:

  - $4,516,400 is included in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget for the *Welfare Reform – Work Opportunities/Block Grant Funds Programs 02, 08, 10* grant from the Maryland Department of Human Resources. This program provides employment-related assistance to clients of various benefit programs.
  - $2,417,300 is included in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget for the *Emergency Housing Program* funded by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. This program provides emergency COVID-19 funding for hotel/motel, emergency shelter and rental assistance.
  - $2,347,800 is included in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget for the *Crisis Intervention Public Schools* (formally *Prince George's Community Schools Network*) program. This program provides advocates for schools with challenging dynamics and connects families to various services through customized case management.
  - $1,625,000 is included in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget for the *Office of Home Energy Programs (Maryland Energy Assistance Program and Electric Universal Service Program)* funded by the Maryland Department of Human Resources. This program provides assistance to families with incomes at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level to meet the cost of winter energy bills.
  - $1,580,000 is included in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget for the *Affordable Care Act – Connector Program* funded by the Maryland Department of Human Resources. This program provides funding to reach uninsured residents and small businesses in the County.
  - $1,200,000 is included in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget for the *Homeless Youth Demonstration Project* funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This program funds innovative approaches to preventing and ending youth homelessness (targeting households in which no member is older than 24 years).
  - $1,065,000 is included in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget for the *Interagency Family Preservation* program funded by the Maryland Department of Human Resources. This program provides funding to prevent out of home placements of children by providing in-home services and support to the families whose children at risk for out-of-home placement.
  - Information about the remaining 18 grant funded programs is available on pages 531-533 of the *FY 2023 Proposed Budget Book.*

- The FY 2023 budget proposes a Grant Funded staff complement of 229 positions comprised of five (5) full-time and 224 limited term grant funded positions (LTGF). This represents no change from the FY 2022 grant funded staffing level.

Grant Program Funds Authorized Staffing Count

	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2023 Proposed	Change Amount	Percentage Change
Full-Time Civilian	5	5	0	0.0%
Part-Time	0	0	0	n/a
Limited Term	224	224	0	0.0%
Total	**229**	**229**	**0**	**0.0%**

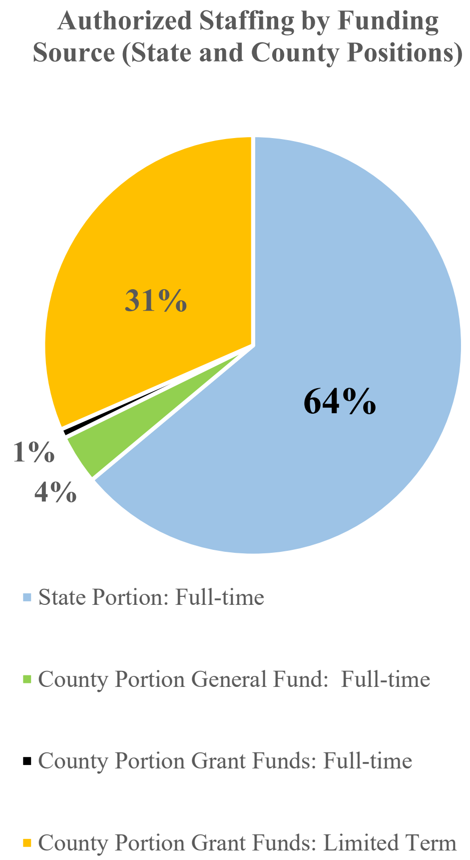
- The following grant programs provide funding for most of the grant funded positions:
  - *Office of Strategic Partnerships and Community Solutions (formally Crisis Intervention Public Schools* and *Prince George's Community Schools Network*) program is authorized one (1) full-time grant funded and 78 LTGF positions in FY 2023.
  - *Welfare Reform – Work Opportunities/Block Grant Funds Programs 02, 08, 10* is authorized two (2) full-time granted funded and 49 LTGF positions in FY 2023.
  - *Office of Home Energy Programs (Maryland Energy Assistance Program and Electric Universal Service Program)* is authorized one (1) full-time grant funded and 31 LTGF positions in FY 2023.
  - *Family Investment Administration (FIA) Temporary Administrative Support* program is authorized 18 LTGF positions in FY 2023. This program provides funding to hire additional staffing to address the timeliness of processing of the benefits for the Temporary Cash Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as Food Stamps), Temporary Disability Assistance and Medical Assistance programs. FY 2023 proposed funding for this program is $550,000.
  - Additional details on grant funded staffing allocations are available on pages 527-528 of the *FY 2023 Proposed Budget Book.*

COVID-19 Relief Funds

- The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act spending recommendations (adopted CR-067-2021) for the Department of Social Services in FY 2022 totaled $3.0 million for the homeless shelter/warm nights program. No funds have been expended as of the beginning of April 2022, but these funds would be appropriated under CB-007-2022, which is currently under the Council's review. The ARP funds support the acquisition/development of a permanent facility for the warm nights program, which is set to return to the pre-COVID-19 capacity as the COVID-19 Non-Congregate Shelter is phasing out.

Staffing

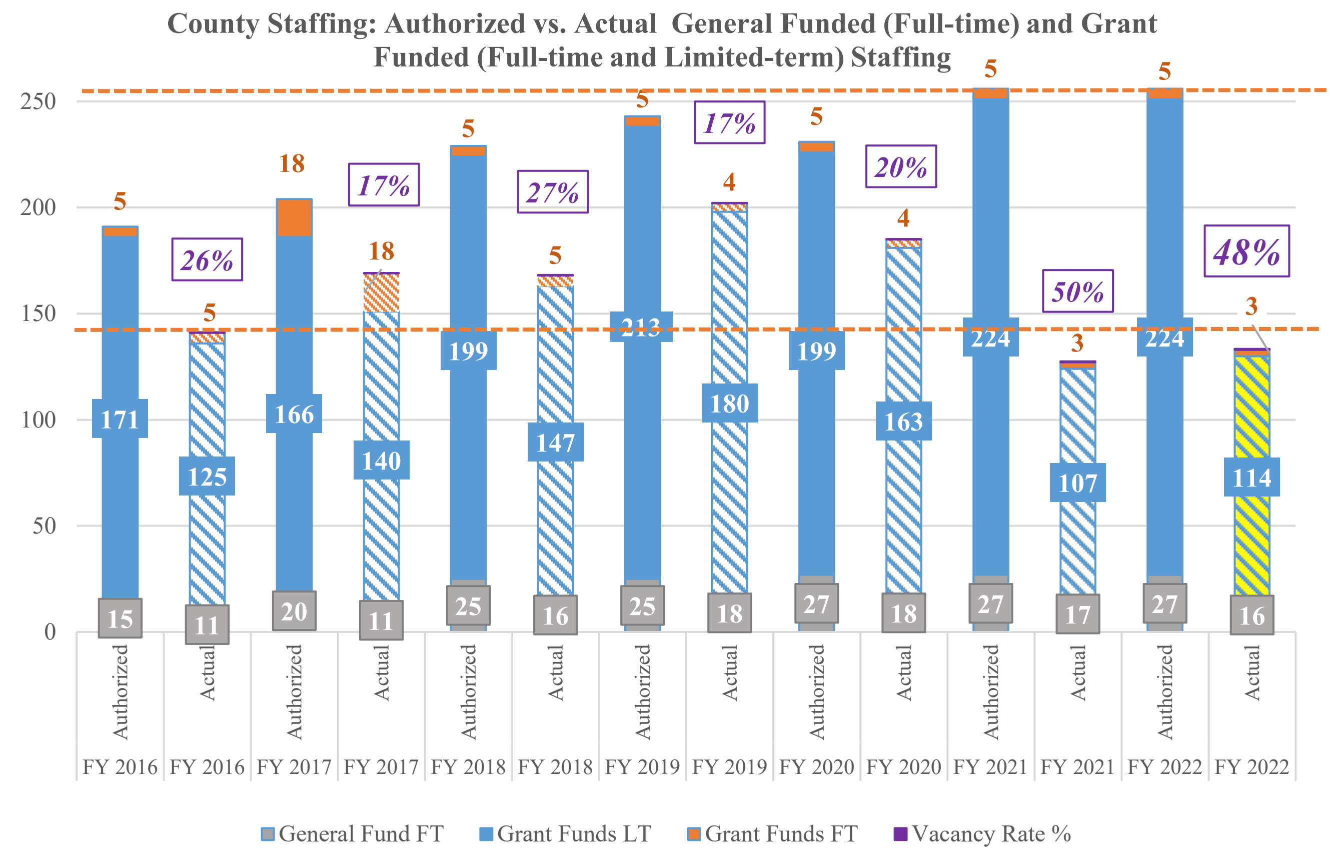
- In FY 2022, the Department's General Fund full-time authorized staffing level is 27 positions. Grant funds provide funding for five (5) full-time and 224 limited term positions.
  - In FY 2022, as of March, the Department reported having 11 civilian General Fund vacancies, which represents an effective civilian General Funded vacancy rate of 41%.
  - In FY 2022, as of March, the Department had 3 Grant Funded full-time vacancies. This represents a full-time Grant Funded vacancy rate of 60%.
  - In FY 2022, as of March, the Department had 110 limited term Grant Funded vacancies. This represents a limited term Grant Funded vacancy rate of 49%.
  - In addition to the County portion, 453 civilian full-time positions are authorized and funded directly by the State. One hundred and twelve (112) of the State positions were reported as vacant, representing a 25% State funded full-time vacancy rate.



- In FY 2022 the number of Department's State funded vacancies have grown significantly.

	FY 2021 Vacancies	*FY 2022 Vacancies*	*Change*	*Change, %*
General Fund: full-time	10	11	**1**	10%
Grant Funds: full-time	2	3	**1**	50%
Grant Funds: limited term	117	110	**-7**	-6%
State Funded: full-time	61	112	**51**	84%
Total	**190**	**236**	**46**	24%

- For the County funded portion of the Department's staffing complement, over the past years the Department *did not* attain its authorized level for either General Fund or Granted Funded positions and has operated with double digit vacancy rates as can be seen from the accompanying graph:



- The County portion of the Department's total actual staffing level in FY 2022 is the second lowest over the reviewed six-year period (since FY 2016) after FY 2021. It should be noted that both FY 2021 and FY 2022 have the highest authorized staffing levels. This reveals two observations: increased authorized level and decreased actual staffing level.
- What makes FY 2022 staffing situation more difficult is a drastic increase in State funded vacant positions. State vacancies increased from 61 reported last year (13% vacancy rate) to 112 vacancies (25% vacancy rate) reported in March of 2022.

▪ The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reported that the Department of Social Services, both General Fund and Grant funded vacant positions, were not subject to the hiring freeze in FY 2022. Yet, out of 129 County vacancies reported last year, the Department reported that a total of one (1) General Fund and 15 Grant Funded positions have been filled to date in FY 2022.

▪ To meet its workload demands while operating with high vacancy levels and high employee turnover for certain positions, the Department continued to contract temporary employees for the second year in FY 2022. The Department has between five (5) to ten (10) temporary employees. Overall, while use of temporary personnel is a short-term feasible solution to the staffing challenges, use of temporary employees is not an ideal solution due to the required investment in training and inability to fill higher skill positions due to the lack of necessary required expertise.

- Employee retention and attrition:
  - In FY 2022 to date the Department has lost a total of 21 employees (all grant funded) to attrition.
  - All 21 grant funded employees who left the Department have resigned seeking higher salaries and employment that offers full benefits. The Department reported that in addition to long-standing employee retention issues, the pandemic added another layer of complexities and ultimately resulted in increased attrition.
  - The impact of high attrition levels, high turnover rates and operating with high vacancy rates varies by each program, initiative and service that the Department provides. Nevertheless, overall, the staffing challenges result in difficulties in ensuring continuity of care for the clients, increased caseloads for the remaining personnel, increases in application processing time, higher likelihood of errors for eligibility programs, increased anxiety, burnout and stress for the remaining employees. Furthermore, with management of numerous grant funded programs that rely on grant funded staffing, inability to fill grant funded vacancies may impede the Department's ability to execute grant funded initiatives.

- Recruitment and employee hiring overview:
  - Persistent high vacancy rates (41% for General Fund vacancies, 60% for Grant Funded full-time vacancies and 49% for Grant Funded limited term vacancies) are indicative of significant long-standing recruitment challenges.
  - The Department reports that it relies on the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to fill its County vacancies. The Department supplements the OHRM's efforts by advertising vacancies on social services related websites and MD, DC and VA newspaper sites.
  - It was reported last year that "*No recruitment changes are anticipated for FY 2022*". No recruitment changes took place and out of 129 County vacancies reported last year, the Department reports that a total of one (1) General Fund and 15 Grant Funded positions have been filled to date in FY 2022.
  - The Department reports difficulties in recruiting both State and County funded positions, inclusive of General Funded and Grant Funded positions.
  - The Department has not conducted any formal salary studies to examine the competitiveness of its positions, however based on annual salary surveys of nearby jurisdictions, the Department identifies "*low compensation rates in comparison to other neighboring jurisdictions*" as one of the key barriers to filling positions.
  - Unlike other County agencies, specifically public safety unionized counterparts, despite the dire recruitment situation, no incentives, dedicated recruitment budgets or concrete suggestions/plans for improving the recruitment challenges for human services employees are being funded or anticipated.
  - Additional information on recruitment challenges can be found in response to the *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Questions No. 19-24*.

- Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Department's staffing: the Department reports that it has shifted to a hybrid worksite model with a three (3) day in office and two (2) days remote work schedule for employees based on their position and responsibilities. Use of technology enables some functions to be done remotely, while other functions continue to be delivered in-person. The Department's offices are open and "are fully operational providing direct face-to-face contact with the public and servicing internal customers."

- The Department reports that four (4) personnel from the Department of Family Services are assigned to the Department of Social Services to support senior care.

Workload and Program Management

- The pandemic continued to impact the Department's operations in FY 2022. Most notably:
  - The Department has experienced a significant increase in applications for financial assistance for the Family Investment and Community Services Divisions. This trend is likely to continue in FY 2023. The increases in workload demands have been exacerbated by the unprecedented staffing challenges as State funded vacancies reach 25% and County vacancies reach 48%.
  - The Department anticipates the reversion of key benefit programs to their "pre-COVID-19 levels."
  - Due to the specialized nature of many programs, the workload cannot be equitably shared across all staff, "*limiting the Department's ability to avoid disproportionate impacts on – and higher caseloads in - certain units*".

- The Department's key goals of equal priority for FY 2023 are:
  - To *provide intervention services to abused, neglected, or impoverished children, adults, and families in order to ensure safety and reduce the risk in their living environment*. Achievement of these objectives requires completing Child Investigative and Alternative Responses, and Adult Protective Service Investigations timely. This effort requires involving families and relevant parties in the decisions made for the well-being of children and vulnerable adults. Lastly, meeting this goal requires recruiting, training, and equipping staff to ensure they are able to provide effective child, adult, and family services.
  - The second goal is to *stabilize families and individuals in need through increased access to services*. To achieve this goal, the Department provides expanded client-centered services, increase points of access, and assist those receiving income support services (TCA, FSP, medical, childcare subsidy, EAFC, and energy) to become self-sufficient and independent. The Department assists people experiencing homelessness including emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, and permanent housing, and facilitate independence.
  - The third goal is to *assist individuals, adults, and families in need to achieve and maintain permanence* by connecting adults and families to community-based agencies and department services. This is to be achieved by providing in-home services to families that are at risk of abuse or neglect in their home as well as recruiting an adequate number of quality foster and adoptive homes. The Department strives to support guardianship, adoption and developing long-term permanent relationships for youth who desire to remain independent or do not achieve permanency. The Department also facilitates the process of reunifying vulnerable adults with their families. For individuals experiencing homelessness or who are unstably housed, the Department assists with promoting stability and independence through the supportive, housing first model that is designed to remove lack of

housing as a barrier then provide comprehensive supportive services.

- Community Programs Division's key programs/services/initiatives include:
  - Homeless services (street outreach, emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing)
  - Crisis assistance (utilities, rent and mortgage arrearages, food and other disasters)
  - Site-based case management for at-risk youth in select middle schools to reduce chronic absenteeism, suspensions, and poor educational outcomes
  - Maryland Market Money (incentivizes those receiving federal nutrition benefits to shop at local farmers markets by matching the dollars they receive in benefits)
  - In addition, the Division manages initiatives targeting unique high-risk populations including:
    - *Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program* (national initiative to develop and implement cutting edge programs and services aimed at preventing and ending youth homelessness in the community)
    - *Pay for Success Demonstration Program* (national initiative using housing as a solution for reducing recidivism in the criminal justice system for high system utilizers of Homeless, Corrections and Health systems); and
    - *COVID-19 Non-Congregate Overflow Shelter* (temporary expanded shelter for homeless, high risk and persons under investigation/positive COVID-19 residents who are living in places not meant for human habitation or cannot safely shelter in place).
  - Community Programs Division's key concerns are:
    - The Department reports that "*the pandemic brought new temporary funding and resources with reduced regulations and greater flexibility. This has been particularly helpful in stabilizing families*". However, return to pre-COVID-19 benefits and reinstatement of recertification processes will result in the exit of many families from assistance.
    - Many programs in the Community Programs Division are "*person centered and do not lend themselves to remote work which is becoming a trend in the workplace market*." This is impacting staffing and recruitment of skilled workers and the Division is enduring a 53% vacancy rate and a significant increase in workload ratios for the existing personnel.
    - To respond to the pandemic, the Division instituted a temporary 249 bed increase in emergency shelter response (COVID-19 and high risk). The Department notes that "*the rapidly growing increases in the cost of housing and other essential services, continue to present challenges to successful unsubsidized exits from the homeless systems by the end of the fiscal year*." The warm nights program will revert to pre-COVID-19 levels. The COVID-19 Non-Congregate Shelter will be phased out and a new facility for the warm nights program will be funded through the ARP funds.
    - The Department also highlights the increase in "*high risk residents accessing shelter beds*" rather than finding response systems that are more appropriate to meet their needs (specifically individuals with behavioral health concerns, health conditions, and those reentering the community from incarceration).
    - The Division recently launched a Low-Income Household Water Assistance

Program and is working through State regulations to fully operationalize this initiative.

- Further details about the Community Programs Division's operations are provided in response to the *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Question No. 34*.

- Child, Adult and Family Services Division’s key programs/services/initiatives include:

  - *Adult Services* provides services to assist elderly or vulnerable adults.
  - *Child Protective Services (CPS)* is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of children by investigating allegations of abuse and neglect.
  - *Family Preservation* is a home-based service designed to keep the family unit together; assist families in creating stable and nurturing home environment; promote healthy child development; and prevent out-of-home placement.
  - *Foster Care* provides short-term care and supportive services to children who are unable to live at home due to child abuse and neglect. Children are placed in family foster homes, kinship care, as well as congregate care.
  - *Policy, Practice and Ready by 21* provides housing, mentoring, education, independent living, vocational, and financial support, and emotional well-being to youth aging out of foster care.
  - Child, Adult and Family Services Division’s key accomplishments in FY 2022 include: being selected to pilot the Center for Excellence Project to create a Center of Excellence for Foster Family Development; partnering with the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) to facilitate access to healthcare for children in foster care; and partnering of the Child Advocacy Center with Joint Base Andrews to improve services to the military families.
  - Child, Adult and Family Services Division’s key challenges and concerns are:
    - Finding appropriate placement for children, especially for children with behavioral/mental health diagnoses.
    - Prolonged hospitalizations for children who are emergently admitted to the hospital for medical/ psychological needs due to the lack of appropriate placements.
    - Staffing shortages.
  - Further details about the Child, Adult and Family Services Division’s operations are provided in response to the *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Question No. 35*.

- Family Investment Division’s key programs/services/initiatives include:
  - *The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*, formerly known as Food Stamps, helps low-income households buy the food they need for good health.
  - *Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), Maryland's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program*, provides cash assistance to qualifying families with dependent children.
  - *The Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP)* is available to help low-income, disabled Marylanders through a period of short-term disability or while they are awaiting approval of federal disability support.
  - *Medicaid*, also called Medical Assistance (MA) pays the medical bills of needy and low-income individuals. Customers apply for this program through the Maryland Health Benefits

Exchange (MHBE) however, the Department processes MA for special populations *i.e.*, Medicare and age 65 and older.

- *The Public Assistance to Adults (PAA) program* pays for the cost of care and a personal needs allowance for needy MA eligible individuals who live in assisted living facilities licensed by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and in Certified Adult Residential Environmental homes (also known as Project Home).
- *Emergency Assistance to Families with Children (EAFC)* provides emergency cash assistance to families who need emergency help paying rent or utilities or for other emergencies.
- *The Burial Assistance Program* provides limited financial help with funeral expenses of deceased recipients of Public Assistance programs if their families cannot afford funeral costs.
- The Department reports that the Family Investment Division has "*completed an unprecedented number of applications received during the pandemic providing needed benefits to over 132,000 residents of our County*." For example, the SNAP caseloads increased by 98% and TAC by 96% between FY 2019 and FY 2022, while the staffing levels have decreased.
- Family Investment Division's primary concerns include:
  - Ensuring user access to services, especially for those who do not have technology or who require additional assistance.
  - Addressing the fact that "*a significant number of people who are eligible [for services/benefits] are not accessing the services for various reasons. This includes cultural, linguistic, stigma, misconception/misunderstanding, technological divide, etc. Bridging this gap continues to be challenging*."
  - Staff retention given the stress levels and a relatively low pay.
  - Technological challenges hinder the Department's efforts to deliver services effectively.
  - Some customers lack the knowhow to navigate the services effectively.
- The Division's top priorities are to: fill existing vacancies; enhance staff training; resolve MD THINK related issues; and resume community outreach efforts to improve service accessibility.
- Further details about the Family Investment Division's operations are provided in response to the *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Question No. 36.*

- The Department is working to develop a new Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (an update to the *Ten-year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in Prince George's County 2012-2021*). The Department is still confirming a technical assistance partner to oversee the development of the Plan. The Department will work on the Plan in the remainder of FY 2022 and FY 2023. Key elements of this effort are described in the response to the *FY 2022 First Round Budget Review Question No. 34(g)*.

- A list of the Department's partner organizations is provided in Attachment E in response to the *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Question No. 50.*

Equipment & Information Technology (IT)

- The Department reports that there are no plans for new IT initiatives apart from the State programs, which are currently being implemented. In FY 2022 most equipment and software costs consist of licensing renewals of the MD THINK and VOiP. No new initiatives are planned for FY 2023.

- The Department reports that MD THINK is fully operational and streamlines the application process by allowing users to apply for several State benefits using a single application. Customers can also complete recertifications, reports changes, and perform other functions. Approximately 90,000 applications for benefits are processed through MD THINK in a year and additional 16,000 applications for Health Exchange and Crisis Assistance are processed outside of MD THINK. The Department is working with the State to overcome any issues related to MD THINK operations.

- The Maryland Department of Human Services implemented several new IT initiatives during FY 2021 as part of the ongoing effort to fully transition from legacy information systems and hardware to new and more efficient systems, including but not limited to the implementation of MD THINK (full migration expected by mid-FY 2022) and conversion from a Private Branch Exchange (PBX) phone system to VoIP. These are State funded initiatives, which will enhance the Department's efficiency and service delivery capacities.

- The Department reports that it continues to evaluate how it can provide a more comprehensive case management and a more integrated approach to service assessment/provision. The Department is working with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to explore the possibility of developing an in-house case management solution to replace the Social Solutions Efforts to Outcomes (ETO).

- The Department explored the option of working with Unqork on a no code enterprise-grade software application to support online collection of applications, document uploads, case processing, and reporting, and found it to be cost prohibitive. The Department reports that it is exploring other software options to support homelessness and shelter management operations.

Facilities

- The total 'footprint' of the Department's operations, including presence at partner organizations, is provided in Attachment G in response to the *FY 2023 First Round Budget Review Question No. 49*.

- The Department reports that it seeks to increase its community presence through co-locations and partnerships which will allow some of its staff members to work off-site.

- The Department looks forward to the construction and opening of the Regional Health and Human Services Center which will house its Administration and Adult Services staff. This project is included in the Health Department's CIP and was expected to be completed in FY 2022. Based on the most recent update from the Health Department, this project will not be completed in FY 2022 and the anticipated project completion is now estimated to be Summer 2023.