

Tioga County Department of Social Services
2015 Annual Report



9 Towns, 6 Villages



One Community



Shawn L. Yetter, Commissioner
Department of Social Services

Martha Sauerbrey, Chair
Tioga County Legislature



2015
Commissioner's Advisory Council

Donna Corbin, Director
Glove House, Inc.

Ryan Dougherty, Superintendent
Newark Valley Central Schools

Fran Bialy, Executive Director
A New Hope Center

Rebecca Kauffman, Interim Director
Tioga County Public Health

Kathleen Keene, Principal
Tioga Central Schools

Lori Morgan

Community Services Director
Tioga County Mental Hygiene

Dr. Joseph Morgan, Superintendent
Spencer-Van Etten Central Schools

Sister Mary O'Brien
Executive Director
Tioga County Rural Ministry

Marilyn Ochs
ACT and Owego Citizen

Dr. Randy Richards, Superintendent
Waverly Central Schools

James Rich, Director
Tioga County Public Health

Susan Ruff, Advocacy Director
Southern Tier Independence Center

Dr. William Russell, Superintendent
Owego-Apalachin Central Schools

Renee Spear, Executive Director
Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga
(Alternate, Laurie Ellis)

Elizabeth Stieglitz
Berkshire Citizen

Kelly White
Nutrition Program Manager
Cornell Cooperative Extension

Jackie Spencer
Association Community Educator
Cornell Cooperative Extension

A Message from the Commissioner



I am pleased to present the 2015 Annual Report for the Tioga County Department of Social Services. As you will find within the details of the report, the Department continued its mission of promoting self-sufficiency and protecting our most vulnerable citizens. We accomplish this through the tireless efforts of a dedicated and highly trained staff who, despite constant changes and unique challenges within the world of Social Services programming, maintain their focus on the person in front of them. The members of our team of Public Servants (a term which, sadly, has become maligned in recent years) are all here for the right reasons. I couldn't be prouder of them for the work they do, day in and day out.

The broad program and policy issues that county Departments of Social Services face continue to be complex. We are faced with managing a Medicaid population that the State is working towards assuming full administrative responsibility for, but in the process we continue to be the "go to" point for our residents receiving timely health care coverage. Federal Mandates on Strengthening Families created additional, and unfunded, mandates on how our Child Welfare Staff work with every family. Increases in policy and paperwork decrease actual casework time with families at a time when family's needs are growing. We are not immune to the growing opiate and methamphetamine crisis and its impact on the people we serve and the challenge of how to educate ourselves in order to serve them better.

There is a lot of good news out there too. In 2014, Tioga County had the 5th lowest poverty level of the 62 counties in the State. This doesn't happen by accident. Our commitment, along with our partner agencies in the County, to moving people out of poverty and towards sustainability, is a constant battle that is worth fighting. We are winning it, one family at a time. Cash Assistance caseloads have decreased back to pre-recession and pre-flood levels. Our Foster Care caseload, per capita, is one of the lowest in the State as we continue to keep children in Tioga County safe. We moved over \$5.5 million dollars into the hands of custodial parents through our Child Support programs. Strong employment opportunities and job growth in the County will help us sustain these outcomes. And, because no system can be fail-safe, we protected tax dollars through our Fraud and Front End Detection Systems to the tune of 5 arrests for Fraud and over \$1.2 million in cost savings by diverting fraud before it could happen.

All of the aforementioned could not be accomplished without our dedicated staff and our Administrative team providing leadership throughout the year to reach these outcomes. Tioga County is a better place to live because of the work we all do together.

Shawn L. Yetter
Commissioner

Tioga County Department of Social Services

Mission

The Social Services department works to promote self-sufficiency and protect citizens by providing financial and social services to eligible Tioga County residents through program development, application of the law and encouragement of responsibility in an empathetic, timely and customer focused manner.

Values

Responsibility

Accepting personal and professional accountability for the delivery of dependable, reliable services.

Integrity & Ethics

Ensuring optimal standards of service with honesty, trust and dedication.

Equality

Promoting fairness and impartiality among all.

Respect & Compassion

Expressing consideration and empathy toward others.

Excellence

Encouraging and motivating the best in others and ourselves.

Vision

To be the most respected Department of Social Services, having a culture which values responsibility, efficiency, teamwork, compassion, excellence and universal respect.

Tioga County Department of Social Services

P.O. Box 240

1062 NY Route 38

Owego, New York 13827

607.687.8300

www.tiogacountyny.com/departments/social-services/

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

Shawn L. Yetter, Commissioner
Gail Barton, Deputy Commissioner
Gary Grant, Director of Administrative Services
Natalie Thompson, Director of Employment & Transitional Supports

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

Mickelle Andrews, Accounting Supervisor
Charles Root, Welfare Management Systems Coordinator

EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITIONAL SUPPORTS DIVISION

Kim Clark, Principal Social Welfare Examiner
Rebecca Fetherbay, Principal Social Welfare Examiner
Katherine Garrison, Principal Social Welfare Examiner
Christopher Kallin, Child Support Enforcement Coordinator
Julie Whipple, Principal Social Welfare Examiner

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Christian Root, First Assistant County Attorney
John Van Wert, Second Assistant County Attorney

SERVICES DIVISION

Charisse Campbell, CPS/Preventive Services Supervisor
Liz Jenkins, Adolescent/Adult Services Supervisor
Lauran Murphy, Foster Care/Adoption/Home Finding Supervisor
Michelle Resue, CPS/FAR Supervisor
Jennifer Green, CPS/Preventive Services Supervisor

TIOGA EMPLOYMENT CENTER

Sheri McCall, Supervisor

YOUTH BUREAU

Maureen Hawley, Director

2015 Tioga County Legislature

Martha C. Sauerbrey, Legislative Chair

District 2

Michael Roberts

District 3

Loretta Sullivan

District 4

Health and Human Services Committee

William Standinger

District 7

Health and Human Services Committee Chair

Dale Weston

District 6

Raymond P. Case

District 4

Health and Human Services Committee

Ed Hollenbeck

District 7

Richard L. Huttleston

District 1

Tracy Monell

District 4

Health and Human Services Committee

Administrative Services

Administrative Services

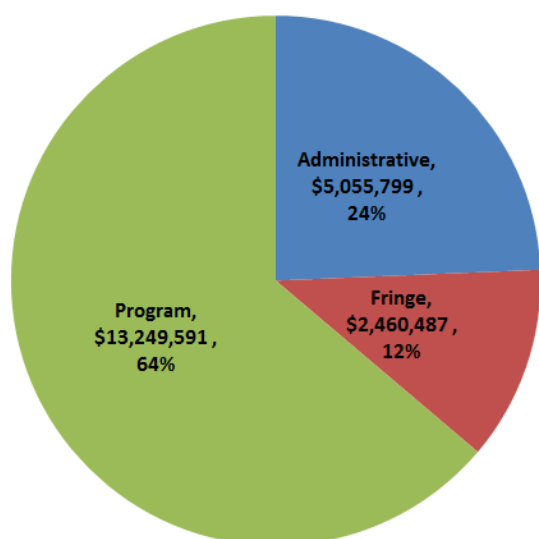
Gary Grant, Director

The Accounting Department is responsible for monitoring and processing all cash receipts and disbursements of the department and for the accurate recording and reporting of all agency expenditures and revenues to the County Treasurer's Office. This includes all program and administrative expenditures. The Accounting Department prepares and submits monthly and quarterly claims in a timely manner to state agencies to receive maximum reimbursements of federal and state aid. Other functions include bank reconciliations, financial management case reconciliations, budget preparations and maintaining the agency's rep-payee accounts.

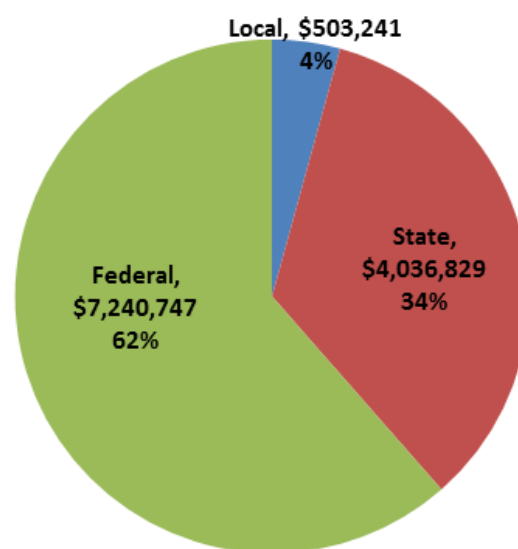
Accounting Highlights

- ◆ The County purchased a new financial management system, *Munis*. The Director of Administrative Services and the Accounting Supervisor were involved in a year long process that included all the set-up and trainings to satisfy specific business requirements. *Munis* went live November 2015 changing and improving many of our processes.
- ◆ The Accounting Department participated in the Annual State Single Audit. The programs tested were Foster Care, Adoption Assistance, Federal Transit, and HEAP. There were no significant findings.
- ◆ 2015 was a year of many changes for the Accounting Department. Along with the implementation of *Munis* we had numerous staff changes due to retirement and promotions.
- ◆ Accounting staff participated in training for our new phone system, a supervisory training, and numerous *Munis* trainings.

2015 Expenditures by Category



2015 Revenue by Source



- ◆ In an effort to continue the goal of going paperless, Accounting is scanning all invoices, receipts, claims and rolls. We now have electronic signatures, and electronic attachments through *Munis*. We continue to access most BICS reports and rolls in TREAT and we use online banking services and electronic transfer of information to auditors.
- ◆ New state requirements for lien recoveries require SSDs to send biennial accountings for existing and future real property liens to recipients and former recipients of Temporary Assistance. Staff worked hard doing research on client's lien recovery information, in order to meet "biennial lien letter" deadline of Feb 1, 2016.
- ◆ Local revenues and recoveries totaled \$747,961 in 2015. Medicaid recoveries from accident settlements, estates, burials, and liens totaled \$220,941.67

Administrative Services, cont'd

The Systems Department is responsible for maintaining and providing user support for both hardware and software. We manage a variety of hardware from network servers to user's computers. We also maintain security access to a variety of state-owned software such as the Welfare Management System, I/EDR (Imaging and Enterprise Document Repository), MyWorkspace and other applications.

Systems also provides agency-wide services such as data entry, processing state reports – both electronic and printed – and creating custom databases for departments across the agency. Systems also does weekly and monthly check production for our vendors such as daycare providers and landlord vendors to name a few.

Systems Highlights

- ◆ In February 2015, the County deployed a new digital ShoreTel phone system. The new phone system included enhancements such as visual display screens and increased customization through the county IT department. Systems played a role in the deployment of phones for Social Services and worked with staff and IT to troubleshoot issues and improve phone functionality.
- ◆ An ability of the new phone system allowed us to create a call center. Systems worked with county IT to create a call center for the HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) department. The HEAP staff now log into the call center and take calls as they come in rather than only have one phone to answer calls.
- ◆ Systems refurbished a laptop that was replaced by a desktop and turned it into an on-call laptop for Services staff to take out into the field for on-call.
- ◆ In a continuing effort to conserve paper and go electronic, Systems converted the remaining vendor ID request forms (Daycare and Services) into InfoPath forms for caseworkers to complete. All our vendor request forms are now electronic.
- ◆ With the AS400 being decommissioned, Systems migrated the Public Assistance data dating back to the 1980s over to a new system as *Munis* was not going to have that data stored on it. In July 2015, Systems had successfully imported over 17,000 case files with a total of over 88,000 individual records.
- ◆ Systems took an active role in helping the HEAP department during the HEAP season. Systems took on registering HEAP applications, both paper and electronic, and entered them into a database so that if clients called to check on the status of their application, workers could see in real-time the status of the application.
- ◆ Systems continue to keep computer equipment up-to-date by working on an agency-wide refresh plan. In 2015, Systems replaced seven Services' staff laptops with desktops and we upgraded two user's laptops. We also replaced six square flat-screen monitors with rectangular flat screen monitors.
- ◆ Systems data entered 15,042 cases and registered over 900 applications into the Welfare Management System.
- ◆ The State conducted an annual audit of the Connections application – ensuring that users only have the needed security clearances to access the data needed for their job. The audit also studied the physical security of the site and verified that security policies for both data access and user access are strictly followed. The audit concluded that Tioga County is doing an outstanding job at following these processes and adhering to security as outlined by the State.



Children and Adult Services

Children and Adult Services

Gail Barton, Deputy Commissioner

2015 was a busy year in the Children and Adult Services Division. There were increases in referrals in several program areas: New York State Central Register child protective reports, PINS Diversion intakes, and adult services-both long term care and adult protective services.

Contracts for preventive services proved their value and effectiveness in keeping children safely at home. Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol assessments by a contracted therapist of families involved with Child Protective Services, assisted caseworkers with assessing child safety and determining case plan goals.

Stability and safety indicators for children in foster care were above state and national averages. There was a significant decrease in the percentage of institutional beds utilized by foster children.

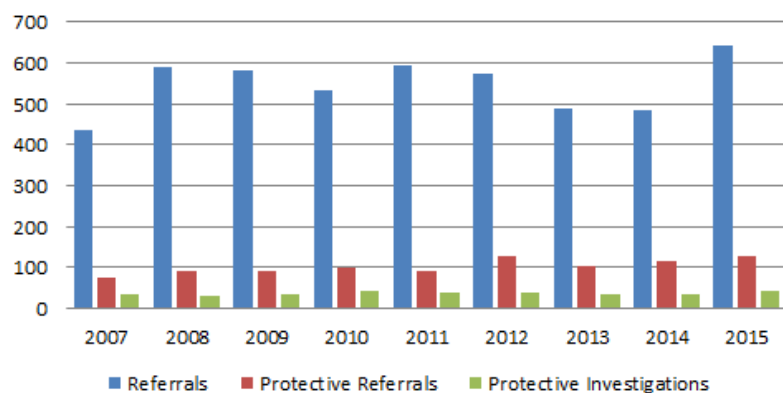
Implementation of the provisions contained in the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act resulted in additional procedures and work requirements for casework staff. The act requires that policies, procedures, and tools for identifying children at risk be utilized and requires increasing normative experiences for children in foster care.

In 2015, Tioga County undertook planning measures to better identify, prevent and address runaway and homeless children and youth in the County. Tioga County is a rural community and this population is not visible in this low population density county. Currently, there is not a runaway program in the County. The Youth Bureau is charged with completing a summary report on this population.

Adult Protective/Adolescent Services

- ◆ Adult Services referrals increased 19.5%, (483 in 2014 to 641 in 2015).
- ◆ Adult Protective referrals increased 9.5% (116 in 2014 to 127 in 2015).
- ◆ Adult Protective investigations increased 14.3% (35 in 2014 to 40 in 2015).
- ◆ PINS Diversion Services opened 56 cases, an increase of 30.2% (43 cases in 2014). All of the children served remained at home.
- ◆ Impacted by the closure of the Tioga County Certified Home Health Agency, the Adult Services Unit completed 20 nursing home assessments and 14 waived services referrals in 2015.

Adult Protective Services



Foster Care

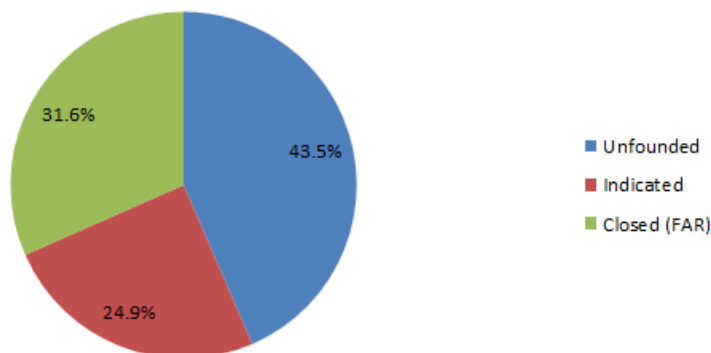
- ◆ Seven foster homes were opened in 2015. All seven homes are able to take any age child with behavioral issues, preventing the need for children to be placed in an institutional setting.
- ◆ 22 children were discharged in calendar year 2015; 13 were reunited with a parent (or caretaker/relative) or adopted within two years of their placement.
- ◆ Institutional bed days decreased from 14.2% in 2014 to 4.6% in 2015.

Children and Adult Services, cont'd

Child Protective/Child Prevention Services

- ◆ CPS received 977 reports and was responsible for determining 653 reports. 43.5% were unfounded and 24.9% were indicated. 31.6% of reports were closed through Family Assessment Response (FAR).

Child Protective/Child Preventive Services 2015



- ◆ Two hundred and twenty-seven (34.8%) of the total reports were tracked to FAR. Of reports initially tracked to FAR, 16 (7%) were re-tracked to investigation due to family's choice or safety concerns within the first 7 days of the report.
- ◆ Reports alleging illegal drugs continue to increase; 15.5% in 2015 vs. 13.4% in 2014.
- ◆ DSS In-House Preventive services were provided to 52 families with 129 children. Of the 24 families discharged from preventive services, 23 (96%) had no new indicated reports for the year.
- ◆ Fourteen neglect petitions were filed on behalf of 42 children; 1 abuse petition was filed on behalf of 4 children.

Happy Endings: Celebrating Tioga County Adoption Day

November 20th was an exciting day for the Dee Smith and Dean Lawton family — they adopted their foster son Shawn! Surrounded by extended family, friends and DSS staff, Shawn became an official member of their family.

After the final court appearances, Tioga County Surrogate Court and officiating judge The Honorable Gerald Keene held an adoption celebration for the Smiths and the 3 other families that were also finalizing adoptions that day.



L-R: Dee Smith holding her daughter, Judge Keene, Dean Lawton, and 1 1/2 year old Shawn.

Youth Bureau

The Tioga County Youth Bureau serves Tioga County by addressing the priorities of preventing child abuse and neglect and providing programs for youth during non-school hours.

In 2015, the Tioga County Youth Bureau and its Board provided funding to eight programs (listed below) that served a total of 1,304 youth. 100% of funding of the \$39,631 allocated to the programs was reimbursed back to the County by the State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

Program	Numbers Served
Cooperative Extension Family Resource Centers	240
Tioga Central Schools Summer Recreation	170
Spencer-Van Etten Schools After School Program	308
Big Brothers Big Sisters	5
Southern Tier Alternative Therapies	11
Waverly/Barton Recreation	502

Adult Services

There continues to be close collaboration with the other agencies involved with serving the elderly and disabled, including the Certified Home Health Agencies and Office for People With Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health. Adult Services continues to serve the needs of the elderly and disabled, providing case management within the home care programs and Adult Protective and Preventive programs. The Adult Services RN completes assessments for admission to nursing homes and waiver programs. The County continues a slow transition to Managed Long Term Care Programs as it is mandatory for all clients needing over 120 days of personal care services.

Long Term Care: The Medicaid Personal Care program served 33 clients, an increase from 22 in 2014, with the average amount of authorized hours of aide services per client per week being 4.4, a slight decrease from the average of 4.7 in 2014. Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) were provided to 36 clients, which was an increase from 32 in 2014. Total Medicaid costs for the Personal Care and Personal Emergency Response programs was \$41,170 in 2015, compared to \$56,035 in 2014.

Participation in the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) increased to 66 in 2015 from 64 in 2014. The average aide hours per week authorized for clients in this program increased to 22.4 from 21.5 in 2014. Total Medicaid costs for the CDPAP were \$522,653 compared to \$569,380 in 2014.

A small number of clients who may be in need of more complex and/or intensive services receive

care through other programs and levels of care. These programs include the Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver, Nursing Home Transition & Diversion Program, the Home & Community Based Waiver, and the Care at Home Waiver.

A representative of DSS participates on the boards of the provider agencies and continually advocates for an increase in aide services for Tioga County. As of December 31, 2015, the Personal Care Services Program had six people on a waiting list for aide services. At the highest, the waiting list reached ten during 2015. This was a decrease from the highest number of 17 in 2011. The most common reasons clients may be lacking aide services are: wait time for aides to be assigned on new referrals; client's geographic location; and finding aides for difficult to serve clients

Family Type Home for Adults: The number of FTHAs in Tioga County remained constant at 6 in 2015. This number of available resident beds remained at 24. The number of available room and board beds remained steady at 11. Thirty-five residents received care in an FTHA in 2015, down slightly from 37 in 2014. The monthly rate for a FTHA resident is from a minimum of \$2,500 to a maximum of \$4,000.



Assisted Living Program: Elderwood Health Care manages the Assisted Living Program (ALP) with a 25-bed capacity in their Waverly facility. Tioga County residents are also served by the Assisted Living Program at Ideal Senior Living in Broome County. Elderwood's program continues to run at capacity and generally has a waiting list. A total of 15 Medicaid individuals were served through the Elderwood ALP in 2015, compared to 17 in 2014. The average length of stay was 38 months, an increase from 34 in 2014. Total Medicaid expenditures for Tioga County residents served by the ALP in 2015 were \$254,622 compared to \$242,964 in 2014.

Aid to Disabled Program: The number of active pending cases varied monthly from 1 to 7. Thirteen new referrals were received and 7 Group II re-determinations were begun. During the year, 19 packets were sent to the State for review. There were 16 Group II approvals and 2 Group I approvals. One was disapproved and three remain, pending State review. Ten cases were discontinued. The reasons for discontinuation were varied, including client moved, SSI/SSD was approved and DSS assistance case closed.

Adult Services case activity for 2015 included:

641 Adult Services referrals (up from 483 in 2014)

472 referrals came from three sources:

34 from county agencies

193 from families

245 from numerous and varied community agencies in Tioga and Broome Counties, friends and neighbors

169 referrals came from sources including hospitals, physicians and assisted living programs

The 641 referrals received were referred as follows:

188 to General Long Term Care

278 to other DSS departments and community agencies

73 to Department of Aging

127 to Protective Services for Adults

As more than one service may be provided to a client, the number of referrals made may exceed the number of referrals received.

Employment and Transitional Supports

Employment and Transitional Supports Natalie Thompson, Director

The Department of Employment and Transitional Supports (DEATS) plays an integral part in assisting Tioga County residents to become self-sufficient by helping them find employment by offering them the tools and support needed and supplementing their basic needs when they are not working, unable to work or are under-employed.

DEATS houses over 40 employees at the County's Health and Human Services location working in three major service areas: Food Stamps and Medicaid (FSMA); Energy/HEAP; and Employment and Temporary Assistance. Also under its purview is the Child Support Enforcement Unit (CSEU). Located at 20 Court Street in downtown Owego – one of the seven CSEU staff, an investigator, is housed at DSS for ease of service to clients.

All together, the DEATS unit handles over 23,000 cases each year. DEATS staff also cover the reception desk for the entire Health and Human Services building, greeting and directing over 15,000 visitors each year.

In 2015, Darlene Weidman retired after 30 years with DSS, vacating the position of Director of DEATS. In September, Natalie Thompson returned to Tioga County DSS after a 15 year absence to fill the position.

Child Support Enforcement Unit

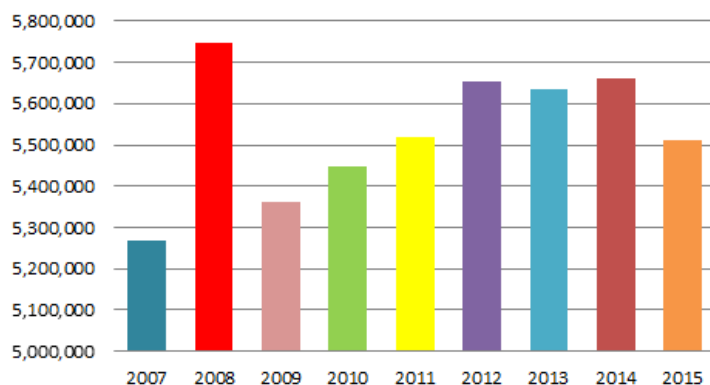
The Child Support Enforcement Unit (CSEU) is mandated under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act to ensure that legally responsible persons, to the best of their ability, contribute toward the support of their children. Child support services are available free of charge to any parent, guardian, or caretaker of a child for whom child support is needed. (There is a \$25 annual service fee for any custodial parent who has never received TANF and is collected when the non-custodial parent has paid \$500 towards current child support). Filing for child support from non-custodial parents is part of the application process for Public Assistance and Medicaid. Applicants for, or recipients of, public assistance are automatically provided with support services unless otherwise indicated.

The Office of Child Support Enforcement works to:

- ◆ Locate non-custodial parents.
- ◆ Provide assistance in obtaining court orders for child support payable to the Support Collection Unit.
- ◆ Establish paternity for children by assisting both parents with the signing of a voluntary acknowledgment of paternity or through family court by filing petitions to establish paternity. Genetic marker or DNA testing may also be used to aid in making a determination about paternity.
- ◆ Enforce unpaid child support: All individuals obligated to pay child support obligations through the Office of Child Support Enforcement are subject to any and all enforcement measures available.
- ◆ Review support orders for increased support based on cost of living adjustments.
- ◆ Modify child support orders based on changes in circumstances.

In 2015, the Tioga County CSEU collected \$5,511,121.00 for children living in the County, filed 956 petitions, established 202 support obligations and 104 paternitys. A caseload averaging around 4,000 per month is maintained by CSEU.

SCU Collections by Year



Energy/HEAP

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a vital program that helps low-income people pay the cost of heating their homes. The 2014-2015 HEAP Season ran from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015. 6,578 households (32% of the 20,350 households in Tioga County) received a benefit through HEAP. 3,368 (51%) of the client households included a vulnerable person (defined as having one or more of the following: a person over the age of 60; a child under the age of 6; a disabled individual). Over \$3.8 million in benefits were distributed at an average of \$464.

Regular benefits authorized ranged from:

- \$575 to \$625 for bulk fuels
- \$500 to \$550 for coal/pellets/wood
- \$350 to \$400 for utilities

Emergency benefits which began Jan 1, 2015 for the season were:

- \$575 for bulk fuels
- \$500 for wood, pellets, coal and corn
- \$140 (for non-heat utility) to \$490 (for heat related utilities)

An additional emergency benefit was authorized starting on March 9, 2015.

The furnace repair and replacement component closed on January 9, 2015 due to a lack of funding and the HEAP season closed on March 27, 2015. An Air Conditioning Component was authorized and opened on May 1, 2015 and closed on August 31, 2015

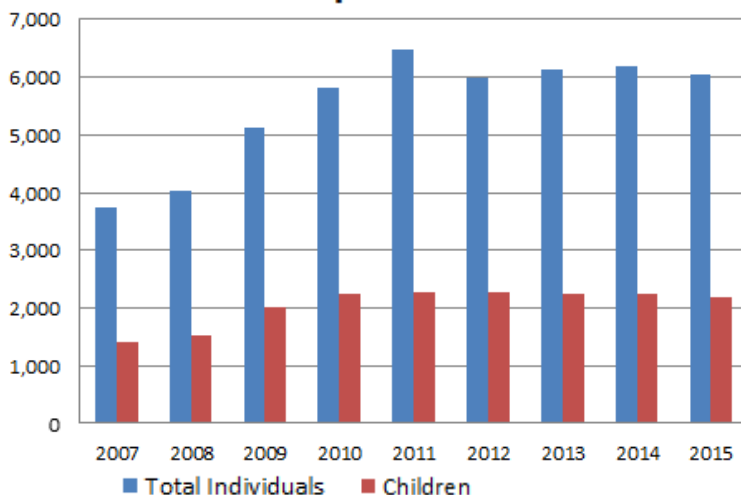
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid

The SNAP and Medicaid Unit—often referred to as FSMA— manages the applications and undercare for those requiring assistance with food stamps and medical coverage. SNAP issues monthly electronic benefits to individuals and families that can be used like cash to purchase food at authorized retail food stores and farmer's markets. Eligibility and benefit levels are based on household size, income and other factors. Medicaid is an income and resourced based program available for individuals who need coverage for their medical expenses.

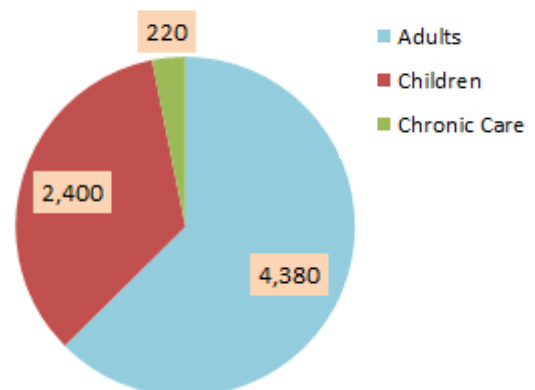


- ♦ The Unit processed applications, re-certifications and undercare maintenance for a total of 17,840 completed tasks in 2015.
- ♦ The average monthly number of individuals receiving SNAP (food stamp) benefits in 2015 was 5,900 (approximately 2,100 of these were children).
- ♦ The monthly average of Tioga County individuals on Medicaid is 7,000 (approximately 2,400 of these are children and 220 are Chronic Care Medicaid).
- ♦ In 2015, the unit received 22,567 telephone calls averaging 1,881 calls per month.

SNAP Recipients 2007-2015



**Medicaid Recipients 2015
Monthly Average**



Employment and Transitional Supports, cont'd

Temporary Assistance and Employment

The Temporary Assistance and Employment Unit's primary goal is to provide their clients with the tools and resources needed to find and maintain employment to become self-sufficient. In 2015, the Tioga Employment Center's staff assisted 8,605 customers.

Services provided included:

- ♦ **Work Experience:** a critical program component in developing recipients work habits. The Work Experience program places these individuals at not-for-profit and public sites within the County, where they perform a fixed number of monthly hours of service as determined by their benefit level - this can be paid or volunteer work. This experience helps them develop the habits they need to hold a job on their own, and gives them an opportunity to learn new skills. Another option is to participate in Tioga Works. This program consists of a work crew supervisor who closely manages a crew of work experience participants. Work projects are scheduled with many different not-for-profit agencies throughout the community. In 2015, 665 projects were completed that totaled 5,717 work hours. 88 participants* have had positive job placements.



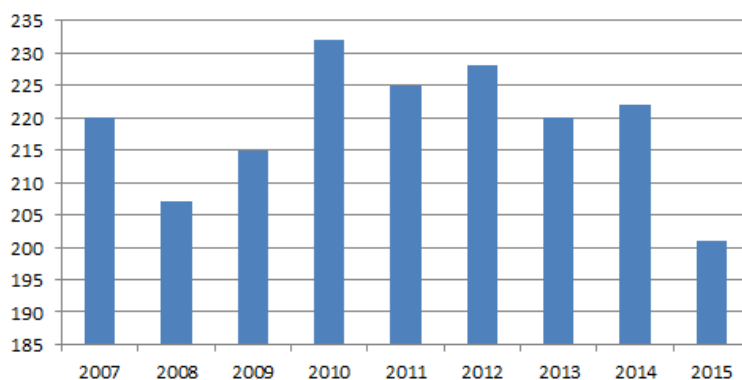
- ♦ **Job Skills Program:** This week-long program is conducted in a classroom setting and the emphasis is step-by-step, hands-on instruction in finding and securing work. 146 Temporary Assistance Applicants successfully completed the mandatory Job Skills Workshop Program; of those 146, 88* had positive job placements.
- ♦ **JOBS:** Staff meets weekly with employable persons applying for and/or in receipt of Safety Net and TANF, and reviews their job search logs. 390 Temporary Assistance Customers were assigned to JOBS; of those 390, 88* had actual job placements.

- ♦ **GED:** 10 Temporary Assistance Customers attended GED classes in 2015.

- ♦ **SAAM Program:** We contract with the SAAM Program (Substance Abuse Assessment and Monitoring), provided by Industrial Medicine Associates P.C., to form a collaborative partnership with treatment providers to bring clients into recovery and ultimately self-sufficiency. In 2015, SAAM assisted/monitored 54 SAAM participants.

- ♦ **Daycare:** Those who are looking for work or are under-employed may be eligible for assistance with their daycare costs. The average monthly Daycare caseload was comprised of 203 cases serving approximately 384 children and 250 adults.

Daycare Caseload 2007 - 2015



- ♦ **VITA:** Tioga County DSS started as a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) site in 2004. Assistance is provided to working individuals to have their tax returns e-filed at no cost. In 2015, for tax year 2014, 124 returns were processed resulting in Federal refunds of \$216,137.00 and State refunds of \$50,509.00 totaling \$266,646.00, of which \$90,280.00 was EITC monies, all returning to, and being reinvested in, the local economy.

* The 3 programs working together — Tioga Works, Job Skills Workshop and JOBS—resulted in 88 job placements.

Departmental Highlights

A word cloud centered around the word 'fraud'. The word 'fraud' is the largest and most prominent. Other words include 'crime', 'conviction', 'dishonest', 'prevention', 'criminal', 'act', 'offences', 'deception', 'violation', 'impact', 'public', 'instrument', 'financial', 'penalties', 'regulated', 'agency', 'law', 'common', 'purpose', 'problem', 'security', 'held', 'costly', 'most', 'rapid', 'false', 'fight', 'abuse', 'loss', 'court', 'guilty', 'serious', 'result', 'damage', 'intention', 'personal', and 'agency'.

- # Tioga Employment Center (TEC)

11

Staff Development and Training

Following the retirement of a Services Supervisor and the promotion of the Staff Development Coordinator (SDC)/Senior Caseworker Trainer to fill a supervisory vacancy, Caseworker Joylynn MacNaughton was promoted to fill the role of coordinating the staff development and training for the Agency.

2015 began with the completion of the Annual Strategic Training Plan. This comprehensive plan was developed with input from Administrators, Supervisors and staff and gave details of the specific training needs for each unit at DSS. Of the 10 requested trainings, 7 were successfully scheduled and attended by staff. The remaining 3 trainings were not completed due to a lack of offerings or time. These 3 trainings have been carried over to the 2016 Strategic Training Plan.

In 2015, ninety three staff attended a total of 196 State-sponsored trainings. This accounted for 3,146.65 hours of training. Some notable State-sponsored trainings included Domestic Violence Training for Local District Staff



and Child Protective Workers, Motivational Interviewing, Safety Training for DSS Workers, Manager as Facilitator, Bridges Out of Poverty, Aging with Chronic Illness, Coached Family Visits Toolkit, Supporting Normative Experiences/Applying the Reasonable and Prudent Standard, Human Trafficking/Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Opiate Abuse and Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents trainings. Also included in the State-Sponsored trainings are the mandatory State trainings. These included: Employment Services

Training Institute for TA and SNAP, Common Core for Caseworkers, Child Protective Services Response Training, NYS Adult Abuse Training Institute, and Protective Services for Adults New Worker Institute.

In addition to the State-Sponsored trainings there were 55 additional trainings which accounted for a total of 1,633.3 hours. These trainings were held at Tioga County DSS or in the community and included: Leadership Tioga, a Teambuilding Workshop, First Friday for Parenting Educators Services, Low-Income Forum on Energy Regional Meetings, NYS Police Crimes Against Children Seminar, Performance Management: Corrective Action and Performance Evaluations, Joint Services Staff Meetings, Strategies for Defusing, Defining and Problem Solving, AFIS Training, and training on Health Homes.

In 2015, the SDC conducted New Employee Orientation for 16 new hires equaling 133 hours of training. The SDC then coordinated and monitored the completion of all additional mandatory and requested trainings required of each new hire dependent upon their unit. Tioga County DSS was a placement for a Binghamton University Social Work intern. The intern was placed in the Adolescent/Adult Service Unit. The intern will be with Tioga County DSS until May, 2016.

The SDC continued to coordinate and distribute the DSS quarterly Newsletter. The Newsletter serves as a positive, morale building tool to provide recognition and updates on the many happenings throughout the various units at DSS. The Newsletter was completed by the Newsletter Committee in January, April, July, and October. The committee meets on a monthly basis and consists of 4 other DSS staff representing Child Support, Systems, Foster Care, and Employment.

Staff Highlights

Outstanding Employees of 2015

Each year the Tioga Department of Social Services recognizes five of its outstanding staff with the honor of Employee of the Quarter and Supervisor of the Year. These employees exemplify the **CORE** values of the agency and its staff.

Community & Compassion Ownership & One Vision Respect & Responsibility Excellence & Equality

Employee of the First Quarter 2015

Jessica Belles

As Social Welfare Examiner in the HEAP unit, Jessica is the point of contact for many of our HEAP customers and vendors. Jessica provides her customers with timely, courteous service. Her kind, caring nature provides a sense of calm and assurance for individuals who are facing a heating or utility crisis.

She is extremely dedicated to her job and often stays late or works Saturdays as needed to be sure our customers do not go without heat. Jessica is a positive force in the Agency. She is always upbeat and goes out of her way to smile and acknowledge everyone.

Jessica is recognized for her initiative, efficiency, follow-through, and excellent customer service skills. She is extremely dependable and can be counted on to complete all tasks without reminders, in a timely and efficient manner. Jessica is well respected by her co-workers and they often go to her for assistance.



Employee of the Second Quarter 2015

Tara Chilson



Tara is an outstanding member of the Food Stamp/Medicaid (FSMA) Team. She is often referred to as our “powerhouse” worker. Tara demonstrates extensive program knowledge, and as a result is often sought out by her co-workers for assistance, which she provides willingly.

Tara consistently completes her daily assignment, and takes the initiative to seek out additional work. She takes great pride in her high accuracy and completion rates. Her ability to maintain a positive attitude towards the work and the Department has been especially appreciated during the transition of the Medicaid program.

In addition to everything she does in the FSMA Unit, Tara also participates in additional committees within the Agency and the County. She was promoted recently to Senior Social Welfare Examiner in the FSMA Unit.

Staff Highlights

Employee of the Third Quarter 2015

John Van Wert

John has been employed with Tioga County on two different occasions. The first in 1993 and then he returned on July 2, 2007.

John works in all capacities as Assistant County Attorney, including child abuse and neglect cases, child support and paternity, expungement and fair hearings, and guardianship cases. His legal knowledge is extensive in all areas, with the majority of his career being spent dedicated to the Department of Social Services. John has a genuine concern for the safety of children and the well-being of families.

John's professional relationships with the many departments and employees of Tioga County are exemplary. He has a good rapport with staff, fellow attorneys, and the courts. John always ensures he is available to assist his fellow co-workers. He is thoughtful in his responses to situations that arise to give the best legal advice while assuring to meet the needs of the Department.



Employee of the Fourth Quarter 2015

Stephen Herbert

As PINS Diversion Coordinator, Steve works with one of the most challenging populations of children - teenagers with behavioral concerns. He not only manages PINS Diversion Services which includes information and referral, intakes, assessing for services, overseeing contracted cases, assisting with obtaining warrants for missing children, he also carries a caseload of his own preventive cases.

He works with the youth on his caseload in a remarkable manner. He is able to engage them in conversations on how to better manage their emotions and behaviors. He does this with a non-traditional casework style; he engages the kids by playing sports. Steve has found that doing this allows kids to open up when traditional conversations do not work. Steve prides himself in providing a positive male role model for the youth in our community.

As part of the Services team, he will volunteer to assist any way he can if other caseworkers are busy, this includes assisting other units during times of need, including going out on Child Protective Reports.

Staff Highlights

2015 Supervisor of the Year Christopher Kallin, Support Collection Coordinator

Chris began his career with Tioga County as a temporary Social Welfare Examiner in August of 1980. He became the Supervisor of the Child Support Collection Unit in 1989, and was appointed as Coordinator of the Unit in 2014.

Chris has a strong work ethic and serves as a respected leader, demonstrating positive work habits, good judgment and flexibility. His in-depth knowledge of Support Collection allows him to serve as an invaluable resource to his staff and supervisors. He encourages staff development, allocates the Unit's workload logically and fairly and provides effective supervision and follow-up with appropriate feedback.

Chris is honest and compassionate with both customers and staff and holds the Child Support Unit to the same high standard. Although the Support Collection Unit is off-site, Chris understands the value of being part of the Social Services team, remaining involved with DSS activities and successfully integrating his team into the organization.

Chris exemplifies the DSS Core Values of responsibility, integrity, equality, respect, compassion, and excellence.



Rebecca Fetherbay Honored as Tioga County Employee of the First Quarter 2015

We are very proud to have had a Department of Social Services employee honored as Tioga County's Employee of the First Quarter of 2015. Rebecca Fetherbay, Principal Welfare Examiner, began her career with DSS in 1999 as a Social Welfare Examiner in the FSMA Unit and was promoted in 2006 to Senior Social Welfare Examiner, and then to Principal in 2009.

In addition to her work duties, Beckie serves her fellow County workers as Vice President of the CSEA Local 854 and Unit 8850. In her 17 years with the Agency, she has demonstrated dedication to the agency, its employees and the Tioga County community.

Staff Highlights

Former Employee of the Quarter Awardees who are still current Tioga County DSS Employees

Beth Ayers	Sandra Nugent
Lynn Bennett	Linda Pardoe
Amy Canzler	Kim Place
Judy Dunbar	Gail Purdue
Kathy Garrison	Michelle Robins
Sarah Gunther	Mary Roddy
Kim Heyman	Charles Root
Tracy Hill	Andrea Rossi
Brenda Holt	Kandi Saxton
Denise Haskins	June Sisenstein
Jennifer Green	John Torrey
Doreen Holbrook	Samantha Webster
Laura Jobson	Judy Westmiller
Sarah Moore	Julie Whipple
Lauran Murphy	Corrine Whitmore
Kelly Nichols	Cheri Zlinsky

Former Supervisor of the Year Awardees who are still current Tioga County DSS Employees

Chari Campbell
Kim Clark
Becky Fetherbay
Kathy Garrison
Liz Jenkins
Don Marsh
Michelle Resue
Julie Whipple

New Employees for 2015

Rosemary DePumpo, SWE Employment
Meghan Hildebrand, SWE FSMA
Tom Lacey, Caseworker CPS/Preventive
Amber Phillips, Typist HEAP
Jackie Reese, SWE FSMA
Kelly Rodriguez, CSW Part-time
Rose Terenzi, Account Clerk Typist SCU
Natalie Thompson, Director DEATS

Retirements

The following employees retired in 2015

Donald Marsh, Grade B. Supervisor
10 Years of Service
Laura Hopkins, Senior Account Clerk Typist
13 Years of Service
Darlene Weidman, Director of DEATS
30 Years of Service
Frances Berry, Principal Account Clerk
22 Years of Service
Geraldine Hammond, Social Welfare Examiner
25 Years of Service

Years of Service

The following employees reached a milestone of longevity during 2015

5 Years

Suzanne Conmy, Senior Caseworker

10 Years

Gary Grant, Director of Administrative Services
Lauran Murphy, Grade B Supervisor
Michele Resue, Grade B Supervisor

15 Years

Sonja Foote, Senior Caseworker
Denise Haskins, Typist
Kelly Miller, Senior Social Welfare Examiner
John Norris, Caseworker

25 Years

Linda Myers, Community Services Worker
Corrine Whitmore, Social Services Investigator

30 Years

Kim Clark, Principal Welfare Examiner
Sandra Nugent, Child Support Investigator

35 Years

Christopher Kallin
Coordinator of Child Support Enforcement

Staff Highlights

DSS Employees Make Difference in United Way Campaign

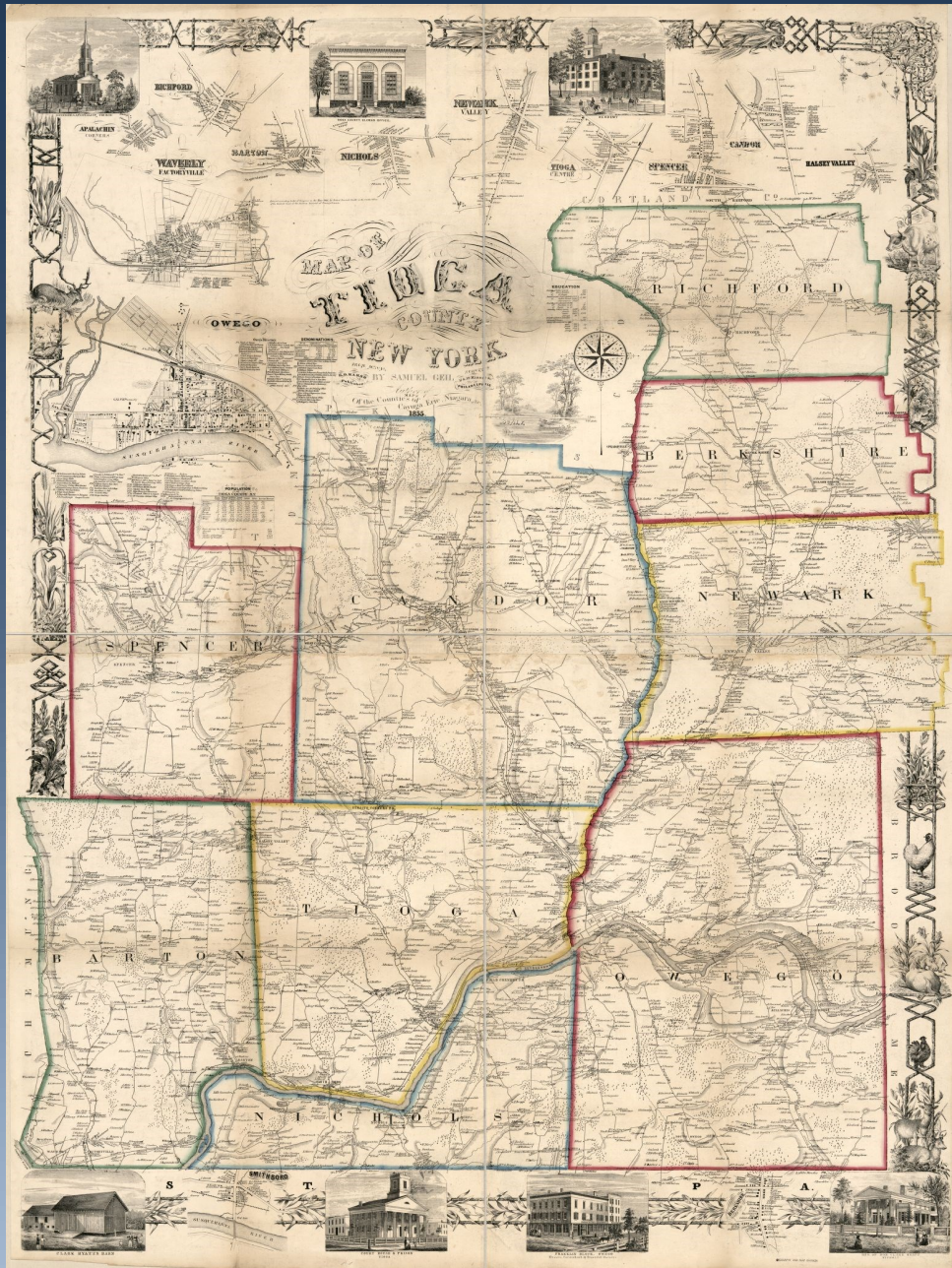
A huge thank you to the DSS employees who participated in this year's
Tioga County Employees' United Way Campaign.

Of the \$6,965 collected for the United Way during the 2015 Tioga County Employees' Campaign, DSS pledged \$3,332, collected \$246 in casual day money and \$84 in parking raffles for a total of \$3,662 - over 50% of the total contributed by Tioga County employees!

A special thank you to June Sisenstein and Chris Kallin for once again representing DSS on the county-wide campaign planning committee.

In 2015, Tioga County DSS staff represented the agency on numerous boards and committees throughout the County, region and State including the following organizations:

Broome-Tioga Workforce Investment Board of Directors
Community Foundation for the Twin Tiers Advisory Board
Community Foundation of South Central New York
CSEA
Family Enrichment Network Board of Directors
Lourdes Hospice Advisory Council
Mildred Truman Faulkner Foundation
New York Public Welfare Association
NYS OTDA Regional Employment Group
Owego Apalachin Family Reading Partnership
Partner's Outreach
Tioga County Drug Court
Tioga County Energy Council
Tioga County United Way Board of Directors
Truth Pharm
United Health Services, Inc. Board of Directors
Women's Fund of South Central New York Leadership Board



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