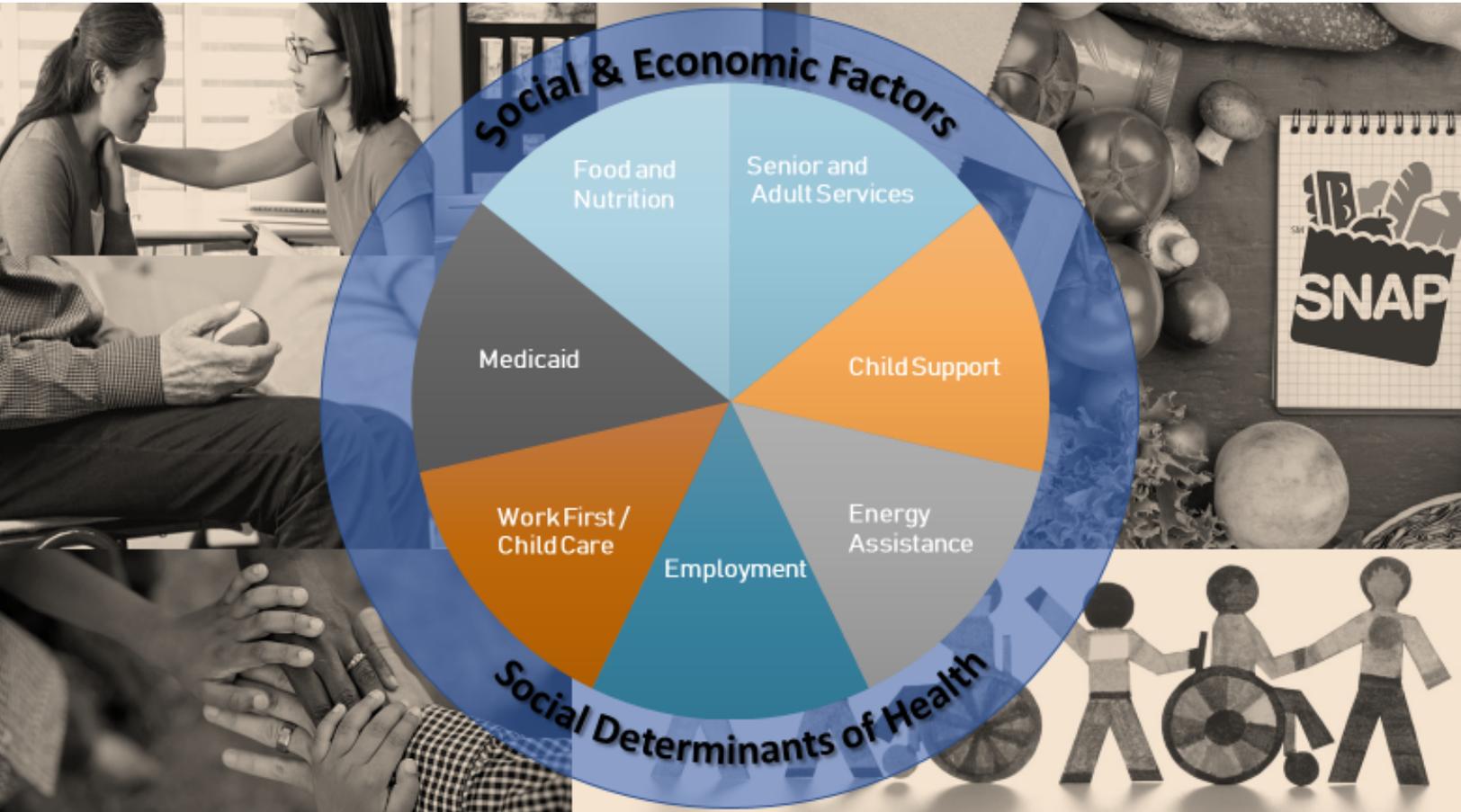




ECONOMIC & SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

Annual Report FY2020



A CULTURE OF PRODUCTIVITY

Division Director Liz Scott

The fiscal year that just concluded was truly a year like no other due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to recognize the flexibility and adaptability of our entire staff during this time. Our staff were called on to respond quickly to rapidly changing events. In some cases, their workload completely changed from what they had been doing. The Division converted almost the entire workforce to remote work in a very short period of time. Plans were made for how to accomplish work that had to be done in the office, such as mailing out client notices and providing applications. This resulted in a small number of staff remaining onsite to perform these functions.

continued on page 2

PROGRAM SERVICES:

- Child Care Subsidy*
- Child Support*
- Employment Services*
 - FNS Employment & Training*
 - NC Works Career Center*
- Energy Assistance*
- Food & Nutrition Services*
- Medicaid*
- Program & Staff Development*
- Senior & Adult Services*
 - Adult Guardianship*
 - Adult Protective Services*
 - Adult & Community Services*
- Work First*



**NO ONE IS MORE CHERISHED
IN THIS WORLD THAN
SOMEONE WHO LIGHTENS THE
BURDEN OF ANOTHER.**

JOSEPH ADDISON

A CULTURE OF PRODUCTIVITY

Division Director Liz Scott

continued from page 1

Staff were trained quickly to take on new responsibilities so we could meet the needs of Wake County citizens. Some programs experienced a rapid spike in demand and others had some tasks suspended during the pandemic. There were many waivers of current policy in a variety of programs to better serve a community hit hard by unemployment and the disruption of daily lives. This caused the workload to change and staff had to be redeployed to where the need was greatest. Some programs, such as Adult Protective Services, still had to provide face to face services in order to protect vulnerable adults.

This report will provide the specifics of how this was accomplished. In addition, there was a significant economic impact in Wake County from additional benefits that were provided to those most in need, which will be detailed in this report.

In addition to the changes brought about by the pandemic, most programs still operated based on state and federal mandates and the requirement to meet performance targets. This report will also provide a summary of our performance on these measures.

All Division staff participated this year in the “Defining Our New Professionalism” workshop, a series of eight exercises where participants identified and defined professionalism standards for the division.

Many thanks to all staff in the Economic & Social Services Division for their hard work and dedication during this crisis. I would also like to extend our thanks to Human Services and County leadership for their support of staff during this challenging time.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Liz Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Division Director

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

FY2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS



Craig Burrus, Assistant Division Director
Linda Bauer, Program Manager

HIGHLIGHTS

- \$53,655,438 Wake County Subsidy allocation.
- 100% of total allocation spent.
- Wait list eliminated May 2020.
- Average of 45 families per week seek assistance.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- 97.7% applications processed timely (w/in 30 days).
- 98.44% recertifications processed timely (w/in 30 days).
- 96% accuracy rate - no corrective action required.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

EXPANDED RESOURCE ALLOCATION

- All subsidized child care providers (open and closed) received DCD/EE payments in March, April, May 2020 based upon children in care February 2020.
- Only open providers received payments in June 2020.
- DCD/EE paid and waived parent fees in April and May 2020 to all providers (open and closed).
- DCD/EE waived and paid Parent fees in June 2020 for open providers only.
- Bonus payments of \$950 for full-time teachers and \$525 for full-time non-teachers each month.

DEDICATED TO SERVICE PROVISION

- Successful remote workforce conversion in March 2020.
- Email, fax, and mail-in application process implemented.
- Recertifications waived March - June 2020.
- Demonstrated ability to provide timely, efficient services.

DCD/EE is Division of Child Development and Early Education

Economic & Social Services Division

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

FY2020 Program Highlights & Achievements

TOMIKO HICKS
ASSISTANT DIVISION DIRECTOR

PROGRAM MANAGERS
LEWIS JACKSON
ROBIN PARSON

HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS

Implemented case and document management technology solution allowing staff safe, secure, and remote access to systems and electronic files.

\$50.3 MILLION TOTAL COLLECTIONS

98.9% paid directly to families and children. 1.1% reimbursed county, state, or federal government.

1,252 PATERNITY DETERMINATIONS

Legal fatherhood established.

98.22% QUALITY FY2020 Accuracy Rating

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Designated essential workers continuing to provide face to face service as necessary.

Intensive trainer led effort to develop virtual training academy.

All classroom training converted to online training in March 2020.

Relocated all in-office paternity testing to LabCorp facilities.

Modified 5c/5d Court work spaces to advance customer and employee safety during pre-trial case negotiations.

Waivers allowed for suspension of Work First and Medicaid non-cooperation sanctions; and enforcement actions for non-payment of support.

"CHILDREN ARE OUR GREATEST TREASURE. THEY ARE OUR FUTURE."
NELSON MANDELA

EMPLOYMENT

FY2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

CRAIG BURRUS
ASSISTANT DIVISION DIRECTOR

JANNY MEALOR
PROGRAM MANAGER

Employment services include Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, FNS Employment & Training and Job Search Training

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

90 FNS E&T clients placed in jobs.

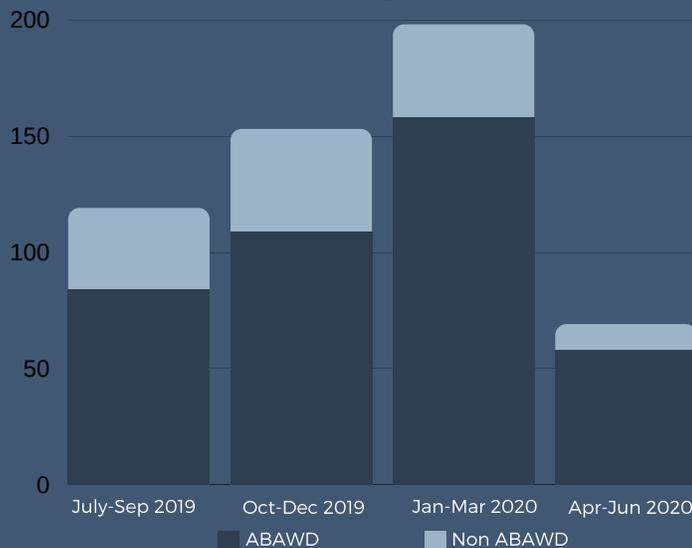
7 Hiring events for NC Works Centers.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

85 Virtual and in person information sessions conducted with more than 225 FNS clients.

21 Virtual information sessions serving 47 NC Works Center customers.

FNS Employment & Training Participants



ABAWD - Able Boded Adults Without Dependents

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

FY2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS



Craig Burrus, Assistant Division Director
Janny Mealor, Program Manager

Wake County Operates
Two Major
Energy Assistance
Programs

CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAM

CIP
Heating and Cooling -
Year Round

LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LIEAP
Heating Only -
December - March

HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- \$2,385,443 CIP allocation with 10,989 applications approved.
- \$2,385,443 LIEAP allocation with 5,659 applications approved.
- 100% of CIP & LIEAP allocation spent.
- Less than 1 day average time to process CIP application and less than 5 for LIEAP.
- 14 FNS and Medicaid staff cross trained to assist with seasonal demand.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

- Governor's Executive Order required a moratorium on disconnection of utility service through July 31, 2020.
- Mail, fax, and mail-in application and phone interview process implemented with policy waiver of face to face interviews.
- Electronic vendor payment approval implemented replacing existing paper process.
- Plan developed with Communication Office educating public about new ways to apply.
- Supplemental payments for all LIEAP recipients totaled \$73,000.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

FY2020 Program Highlights & Achievements



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- New training curriculum developed by a staff work group.
- Services expanded to Western Human Services Center in Cary and Oak City Cares (homeless services).
- Increased Intake staff at Millbrook Human Services Center.
- Application processing reached 95% timeliness by end of FY2020.
- Recertification staff served 36,000+ households, experiencing overall caseload growth of 22% in FY2020.

"THERE ARE GENUINELY SUFFICIENT RESOURCES IN THE WORLD TO MAKE SURE THAT NO ONE, NO WHERE, AT NO TIME, SHOULD GO HUNGRY."

ED ASNER

Koren Harrison
Assistant Division Director

Program Managers
Doretha Daly-Jones, FNS Intake
Luv Sinclair, FNS Review

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Policy Waivers

Waivers allowed food assistance applications to be completed without an interview and automatically extended certification periods for FNS cases so that households would not need to complete a review. These waivers began in March 2020 and are approved by USDA on a month to month basis.

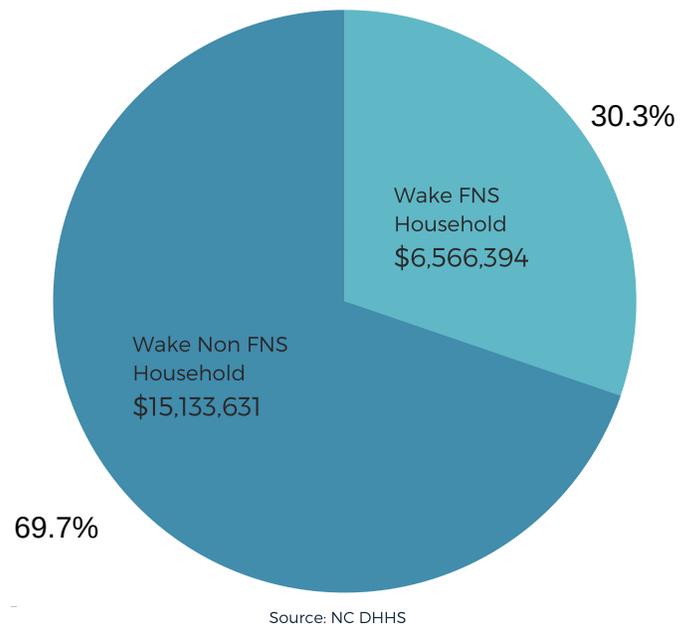
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COVID-19 RESPONSE

More Benefits Available

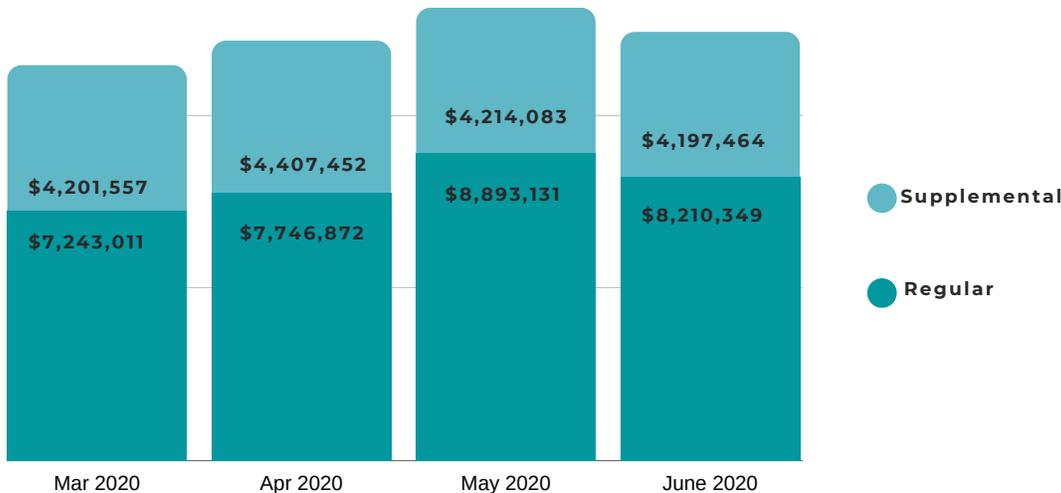
During the COVID-19 emergency, more benefits became available to FNS households including supplements for all FNS households to receive the maximum monthly allotment. This represents a 50% increase in total benefits issued for these months. Pandemic EBT benefits were issued for children who were receiving free or reduced price meals through their school regardless of whether they were receiving FNS benefits. Each child received \$371 for the period of time from March through June that schools were closed.

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Benefits Issued
March 2020 - June 2020



Regular and Supplemental Benefits for Maximum Allotment
March 2020 - June 2020

Source: NC DHHS

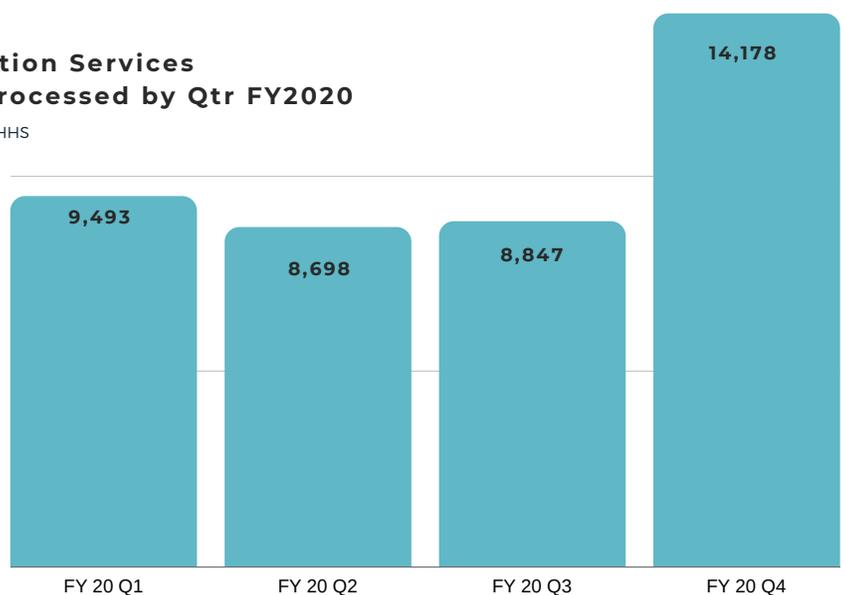


Food And Nutrition Services
Number of Applications Processed by Qtr FY2020

Source: NC DHHS

Surge in Demand

Staff throughout the ESS division helped process the FNS surge. Program and Staff Development trained over 110 staff from Medicaid, Energy Assistance, Childcare, Work First, Employment, and regional center staff, to assist with FNS applications. 20+ FNS Review and 8 Adult Medicaid Review staff converted to dual function workers to process both FNS applications and reviews in their program area.



MEDICAID

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION



COVID-19 RESPONSE

A temporary waiver ensures that Medicaid benefits are not reduced or terminated during the COVID-19 emergency.

The waiver permits a beneficiary's verbal statement of income and assets to be accepted, which allows quicker processing of applications.

Beginning in March 2020, all Medicaid certification periods have been extended during the public health emergency.

Koren Harrison
Assistant Division Director

Program Managers
Maria Eason, WakeMed
Tephia Lindsay, Family & Children
Jessica Lajara Rodriguez, Adult Medicaid
Kathryn Thompson, Family & Children

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Medicaid Intake exceeded timely processing standard of 90% every month in FY2020.
- Average processing time for regular Medicaid applications was reduced from 37 to 19 days.
- Medicaid for the Disabled achieved a 3 day decrease in average processing time (APT) for applications and a 3% increase in percentage processed timely (PPT).
- Family & Children's Medicaid staff developed a process to align certification periods and merge cases within the same family. This simplified the process for families and reduced the total number of reviews due each month.
- WakeMed Medicaid staff implemented new processes which resulted in a 40% reduction in pending Medicaid accounts and 30 new applications per month. The staff assisted patients to obtain verifications needed and screened any uninsured patient who wasn't screened at the time of service.
- WakeMed Medicaid and Work First staff assisted the Family Medicaid section to eliminate backlogs in reported changes.

Program & Staff Development

FY2020 Highlights & Achievements



Liz Scott, Division Director
Sheril Evans, Program Manager

HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

PSD provides training, on site technical support and Quality Assurance to support the following programs in the Division: Medicaid, Food & Nutrition Services, Work First, Child Care Subsidy and Energy.

72 new staff onboarded and trained; over 22,000 training hours provided.

5,000 hours of staff continuing education provided.

On Site Support (OSS) staff resolved over 10,000 help desk tickets in house and submitted 1,100 to DHHS for resolution.

Quality Assurance staff completed over 4,400 case reviews and assisted with multiple audits.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Intensive trainer led effort to develop virtual training academy.

All classroom training converted to online training through Microsoft Teams in March & April 2020.

110 staff virtually cross trained to assist Food & Nutrition (FNS).

Onboarding new staff accomplished through a combination of in person and virtual sessions.

Local and State appeal hearings converted to virtual meetings based on DHHS waivers.

“THE BEAUTIFUL THING ABOUT LEARNING IS THAT NOBODY CAN TAKE IT AWAY FROM YOU.”
B.B. KING



ECONOMIC & SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

SENIOR AND ADULT SERVICES

FY2020 Highlights & Achievements

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Craig Burrus, Assistant Division Director
Glenda Reed, Program Manager

695
REPORTS

Screened in for evaluation of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

95%
TIMELY EVALUATION

Consistently met or exceeded required 95% timeliness expectation for completing evaluations for abuse and neglect within 30 days.

COVID-19
RESPONSE

- Roles and responsibilities of APS staff did not change as a result of COVID.
- Essential worker designation of all APS staff with PPE priority for the continuance of face to face evaluations as necessary.
- Successful remote workforce conversion, that included as necessary office visits.
- 4% increase in reports screened in from FY19 to FY20.

"Aging is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity and strength."

Betty Friedan

GUARDIANSHIP

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

872

Wards

4

Clients with competency restored

9

Clients had guardianship transferred to family or friends in the community

ADULT & COMMUNITY SERVICES

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Monitored and completed investigations for 98 assisted living and 10 adult day/health facilities.

Began work on a new database to automate forms and track data more efficiently.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Social workers are providing support by phone and virtually to their wards who have had to cope with the difficult impact of the pandemic.

Staff have increased online shopping and delivering to clients to furnish essential needs such as food, clothing and medicine.

Increased effort to connect clients with available resources, including WC Hotels for vulnerable populations.

When needed staff are transporting clients to medical appointments.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Staff completed routine checks to ensure facilities have adequate PPE.

Only 10 of the 98 facilities had residents/staff test positive for COVID-19.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the team assumed an active role in connecting facilities with resources to obtain PPE.

Staff collaborated with the Zagat Foundation to distribute more than 500 masks made by volunteers to more than 20 adult and family care homes and delivered 1,000 Mother's and Father's Day cards made by volunteers and sponsored by the Foundation.



WORK FIRST

FY2020 Program Highlights & Achievements

Craig Burrus, Assistant Division Director
Linda Bauer, Program Manager



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

98%

Applications processed timely.

97.1%

Recertifications processed timely.

93.5%

Accuracy rating achieved during annual monitoring. 29 of 31 cases accurate.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

CASH ASSISTANCE SANCTIONS

Cash Assistance sanctions related to non-cooperation with child support and/or failure to perform work requirements were suspended.

TERMINATIONS

Terminations of Cash Assistance cases temporarily suspended during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

Policy requiring face to face interviews was waived to allow telephone interviews.

AUTOMATIC PAYMENT RELEASE

Pay-after-performance requirements waived allowing automatic release of benefits during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

GOOD CAUSE

Good cause is granted when a client is unable to complete screening and testing for substance use.

APPLICATION

Applications are now available in ePass.

Economic & Social Services Division

FY2020 TECH UPDATES

Flexibility has been critical as the ESS Division has had to adapt to a new work environment and challenging times for our community. As most of our workforce has transitioned to remote work, we continue to look for ways to utilize technology to improve our business processes and make our services more accessible to the public.

This year we have worked with Information Services (IS) on many technology projects, including:

- A case management/document management system for Child Support.
- An electronic queueing system for Swinburne.
- Automation of data extraction and management.
- Installation of monitors for remote interviews between consumers and staff.
- New system for management and reporting of Quality Assurance reviews.
- Adult Protective Services document management system.

We also continue to refine and enhance our data management and reporting capabilities so that all levels of staff have the information needed to manage workload and program services.

The IS team in Human Services has been a valuable partner in analyzing business processes and providing potential solutions. This collaboration will be essential as we envision what the future will look like for Social Services programs.