

Henderson County Board of Social Services

February 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

The Henderson County Board of Social Services meeting was called to order by Chair Josh Simpson at 12:01 pm.

Board Members Present	Josh Simpson, Member Melinda Lowrance, Member Rebecca McCall, Member Stephen Gwaltney, Member
Staff Leadership Present	Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board/Director Lorie Horne, Social Work Program Administrator Joseph Maxey Jr., Administrative Officer Debby Freeman, Economic Services Program Administrator Deborah Johnson, Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk
Guest	Kristie Ellison, Advent Health Scarlett Goodman, Advent Health

B. Public Input

None

C. Adjustments to the Agenda

None

D. Approval of Minutes

Chair Simpson asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the January 17th, 2023, regular meeting, there were none. Mrs. McCall moved to approve the minutes as written, Mr. Gwaltney seconded the motion. The motion passed.

E. Board Education

Traci Corn, Program Manager for Adult services, presented to the Board information about our 18–21-year-olds Voluntary Placement Program (VPA's).

Adult Services consists of several different services intended to help disabled and older adults age safely in our community

- We have 15 SWs, 1 CSST, and 2 supervisors
- Some of the services we provide include Adult Protective Services, Guardianship, Special Assistance In Home, In Home Aide, and Adult Home Specialists
- One of the programs we provide under Adult Services is Foster Care 18-21

Foster Care 18-21

- This service is aimed at improving outcomes for kids who are aging out of Foster Care, and help them transition into successful adulthood
- Provides financial support and case management to help the young adult work toward independent living outside of the Foster Care system

At Henderson County DSS, Foster Care 18-21 is housed under Adult Services

- The program moved to Adult Services in 2020
- This is pretty unique among DSS agencies in our state
- We felt that FC18-21 was a natural fit for Adult Services
 - ❖ The Adult Services Social Worker is unbiased, having no past historical experience with the young adult
 - ❖ The Adult Services Social Worker is familiar with resources available to adults in our community
 - ❖ Allows for a shift in the perspective as the youth begins their transition out of the child welfare system and moves into adulthood

We have one Social Worker 3, Tim Ziffer, dedicated full time to this caseload. We currently have 23 young adults in this program – this number fluctuates some, but hovers around 25.

Young Adults in the program sign a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA), which allows them to receive monthly foster care maintenance payments at the standard board rate which is currently \$698/month.

Additionally, VPA's can access LINKS funding.

- LINKS funds can be accessed for a variety of needs including educational needs, living expenses, and skill building, if the need can be associated with the youth's transition to adulthood
- LINKS funds can be accessed regardless of whether the young adult is on a VPA
- Up to \$3,000 per year for transitional needs and up to \$1500 per year for housing needs

Young adults must maintain certain eligibility criteria while in the program, be an active participant in a case management component, as well as agree to live in an approved placement

- Qualifiers for the program include being enrolled in secondary education, employed at least 80 hours per month, or participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment

Prior to the youth's 18th birthday, Tim Ziffer and the Foster Care Social Worker begin coordinating about the transition.

- A Transition Plan Meeting occurs within 90 days prior to the 18th birthday at which time a Transition Plan is completed with the young adult
- The VPA is then developed and signed within the month of the young adult's 18th birthday
- Within 90 days after the VPA is signed, there is a court hearing and a judge approves the VPA

Tim has monthly contact with each young adult on his caseload. Within every quarter, two of the three contacts must be face to face, and one of those must be in the home. The other contact can be by phone. Contact above and beyond the requirement can happen as needed.

If a child is approaching 18 and there is concern that a guardian is needed, there is a protocol we follow to assess the need for a guardian and potentially petition the court prior to the child's 18th birthday. If needed, a guardian can be named when the child is 17 ½ to prevent a gap in services.

Mr. Simpson asked if we knew what the success rate was? Lorie Horne replied that we have a large number that are in college, and they must maintain the qualifiers to remain a VPA. It is very rare that we decommit children from the program.

F. Reports

Director's Monthly Report (Attachment I)

Questions Only

Mrs. Lowrance asked Director McFalls for an update on Medicaid Expansion. Director McFalls stated that last week Medicaid Expansion passed the house. The bill originally had five million in it for DSS, and when it passed the house, it has fifty million for DSS to hire the staff to move into Medicaid Expansion. Now the bill has gone to the Senate. The Senate is expected to address the Certificate of Need because they don't think CON will pass separately. A Senate bill could agree with the House, or Senate could create their own bill. The House must present the budget, so they will have to develop the budget and present it to the Senate.

The House bill states that applications should start being taken for extended Medicaid population December 1, 2023. We are very hopeful that the Senate will get the bill passed. We have included in our four-year budget plan, the additional positions to accommodate the potential eligible participants.

Director McFalls met with Elizabeth Moss from IAM, about the impact on Interfaith when food stamp funding is decreased. Director McFalls also attended a Non-profit meeting giving additional information about the reduction in food benefits and how it may affect families. We are trying to get the word out about the reduction in emergency supplements. We are trying to educate our clients If they use their EBT card at a farmers' market, they can get two times the value of food. Most markets participate in this program.

There could also be a number of people that are no longer eligible due to families' incomes being increased over the previous three years. That could also increase the need for food at foodbanks.

January Employees of the Month (Attachment II)

Questions only

None

December 2021 – December 2022 Statistical Report (Attachment III)

Questions only

None

January Program Administrator's Report (Attachment IV)

Director McFalls contacted the Sheriff's department about sex trafficking cases in Henderson County as the Board had requested. Per the Sheriff's department, Henderson County currently has no child trafficking cases in the county.

Director McFalls discussed training for the staff with the Sheriff's department in Sex Trafficking as the Board suggested. The Sheriff's department is contacting the SBI about facilitating the training and the current data for the county.

Financial Report December 2022 (Attachment V)

Questions Only

None

G. Old Business

DSS staffing update

Director McFalls stated DSS currently has fifteen vacancies. Seven of the vacancies are in Social Work. Seven vacancies are in Economic Services, and one processing assistant 3. We have four candidates in the hiring process. We still have internal moves occurring.

H. New Business

Torie from Torie's home approached DSS to work with him to refer potential employees that need housing, training, and transportation. Torie is currently working on additional housing for his employees. He doesn't hire CNAs, he trains people to work in his facility. He wants to partner with DSS to help the community and those with needs. We would not be screening clients as a potential employee for Torie. We could suggest clients contact Torie for possible employment. Director McFalls asked the Board how they felt about DSS partnering with Torie. He wants to work with our clients, so they are available to go to court and DSS visitations to improve parents' ability to work with DSS case plans. We often make referrals based on a client's stated needs. We match clients with resources.

Mrs. McCall stated that Torie studied the problem of getting employees and he decided to try to help workers with transportation, housing, childcare, and education. Torie is partnering with another business owner to open a childcare center for his employees. Torie has also reached out to non-profits, but they want him to offer housing and transportation even if they weren't employed by him.

Torie would not be depending on us to do any screening. We would just give a client his information, not referring or recommending.

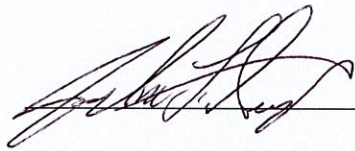
Chair Simpson said he thought it was a beneficial partnership and didn't see where it could be a negative. Chair Simpson stated that employers need to shift their thinking for the labor market.

Director McFalls stated that we would be happy to work with other agencies if we were approached by them.

Mr. Gwaltney and Vice Chair Lowrance supported DSS working with Torie's Homes. Chair Simpson said DSS has the Board's support.

I. Adjournment

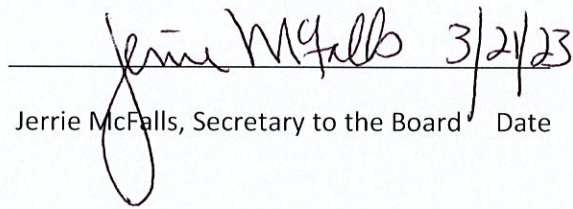
Mr. Simpson asked if there were any additional items for discussion. There were none presented. Chair Simpson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mrs. Lowrance seconded the motion. The motion passed. Mr. Simpson adjourned the meeting at 1:12 p.m.



Josh Simpson, Chair

3/21/23

Date



Jerrie McFalls, Secretary to the Board

Date

Attachments:

- I. Director's Report – February 2023
- II. February Employees of the Month
- III. January 2022 – January 2023 Statistical Report
- IV. Program Administrators' Report – February 2023
- V. Financial Report – February 2023