

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET



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Department of Health and Social Services
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Virtual Conducted Via Zoom

Comments available online at <https://dhss.delaware.gov/>

Good Morning Senator Paradee, Representative Carson, members of the Joint Finance Committee and members of the public.

I am Ted Mermigos, and I have the pleasure of serving as Director of the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS). Joining me today is Julie Shahan, the Division's Deputy Director and Heather Morton, our Division's Chief of Administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today to present our accomplishments, and the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Governor's Recommended Budget.

DIVISION OVERVIEW

Collect, distribute, disburse and account for child support collections from non-custodial parents to families in Delaware and across the country

Locate non-custodial parents

Establish paternity for children born out-of-wedlock

Establish and modify financial and medical court orders

Respond to inquiries from the public, state and federal partners



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At the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS), we are actively working 73,000 Child Support cases.

Our mission at the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) is to deliver quality customer support by partnering with parents to improve the lives of children and their families. This is achieved through obtaining accurate child support orders to meet financial, medical and emotional needs to promote family self-sufficiency and the best outcome for children.

Each of our core functions listed above represents a discrete, yet interrelated process which must be completed to achieve success in securing financial support for families.

COLLECTIONS AND PAYMENTS

Source of Payments

Payment Types	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Electronic	66%	68%	66%
Business Checks	27%	22%	17%
Personal Payment	5%	4%	4%
Other	2%	6%	13%
Total:	100%	100%	100%

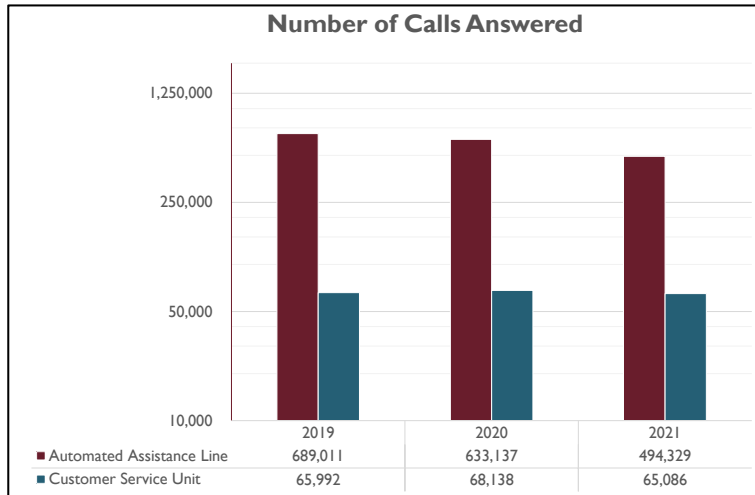


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In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, DCSS collected \$91 million dollars, representing a decrease from FY 2020, which was an exceptional year due to interception of Economic Impact Payments (EIP).

In FY 2022, our goal is to increase collection levels, as we are always striving to better assist the families of Delaware. We are continuously exploring new ways to provide easy, safe and reliable payment options.

CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT CALLS



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In 2021, DCSS' Customer Service Unit received approximately 494,000 calls to the Automated Assistance Line (AAL). The AAL is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for individuals calling about case status and payment information. For complex case questions, Child Support Specialists are available Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

In 2021, DCSS Child Support Specialists answered 65,086 telephone calls.

The Division of Child Support Services is always looking for ways to improve communication with our customers. In addition to our Customer Service Unit, DCSS has a robust customer website as well as social media sites for communicating with our custodial and non-custodial parents.

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES



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Each day, the employees at DCSS work extremely hard to meet the demands of their job responsibilities during these difficult and challenging times.

We have had a significant turnover of experienced employees due to promotions, transfers, and retirements. DCSS strives to prepare employees for advancement within our diverse organization. We are proud to say that many of our current supervisor and management positions have been filled by our qualified internal staff. Succession planning is always the goal to retain knowledge and experience within the division.

Having said that, finding qualified candidates to fill entry level positions has been difficult. Referral lists have been very lean lately, but we as an agency have done our best to fill all our vacancies timely, whether it be internal or external candidates.

LOOKING AHEAD

Head Start/Early Childhood Assistance Programs

- Provide materials and literature
- Conduct training for HS/ECAP employees/providers
- Conduct presentations for HS/ECAP parents
- Waive application fee for eligible HS/ECAP families



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DCSS is working to rekindle a relationship with Head Start (HS) and Early Childhood Assistance Programs (ECAP) in Delaware. These are free programs designed to promote school readiness for children from low-income families up to the age of 5 years old.

Already in 2022, we have had several great conversations on ways DCSS can collaborate with each of the programs by sharing presentations and written materials pertaining to our child support services. We look forward to meeting with the Head Start and Early Childhood Assistance Programs in each of the counties as we continue this very important outreach endeavor.

LOOKING AHEAD



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Recently, DCSS entered into a zero-cost arrangement with the ReManned Project, Inc. The ReManned Project is a nationally recognized non-profit, coaching and consulting organization that has its roots in Wilmington, Delaware.

The ReManned Project specializes in working with men ages 25 and older who desire to make a positive change in their lives. The ReManned Project provides fundamental daily tools to improve the quality of life of individuals, families, and societies.

This collaboration will give DCSS an opportunity to refer non-custodial parents to the ReManned Project, and it will also allow the ReManned Project to serve as a gateway for participants seeking specific child support case information and next-step child support services.

We are really looking forward to this collaboration.

FY 2023 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

FY 2023 Governor's Recommended Budget (\$ in thousands)

	GF	ASF	NSF	Total
FTEs	54.1	2.5	125.5	182.1
Dollars (\$)	5,644.3	1,263.4	26,434.7	33,342.4

Budget Definitions:

GF – General Funds
 ASF – Appropriated Special Funds
 NSF – Non-Appropriated Special Funds
 FTEs – Full Time Equivalent Positions



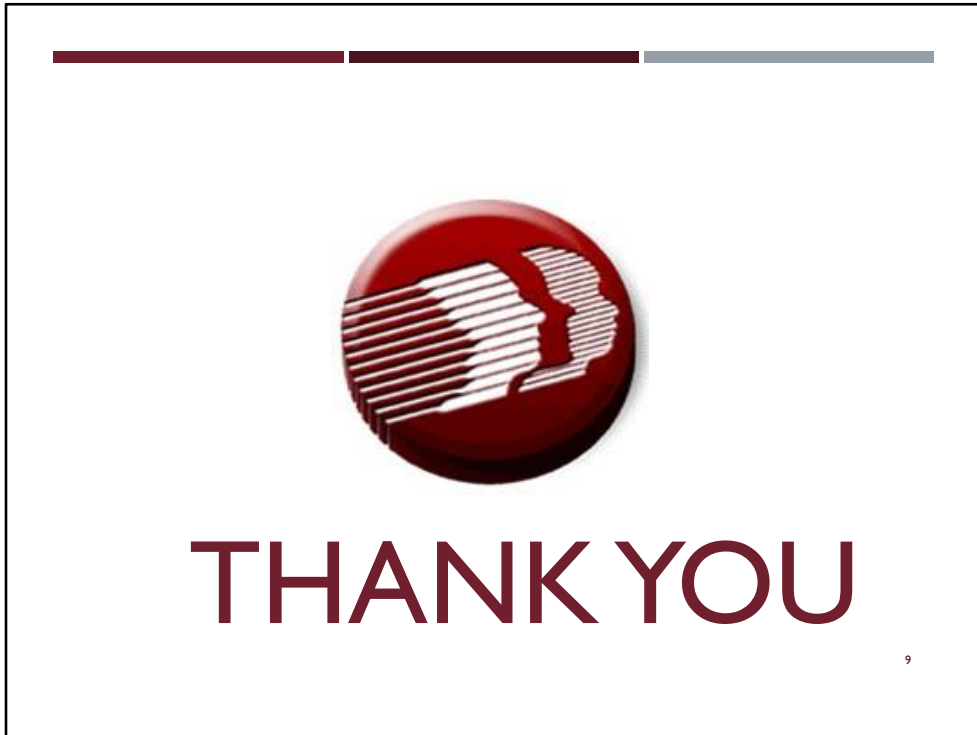
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NOTE: Dollars may not add due to rounding

The slide above shows DCSS' budget included in the FY 2023 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB).

Our Division's GRB is:

- \$5,644.3 [Five Million, Six Hundred Forty-Four Thousand, Three Hundred dollars] in General Funds (GF)
- \$1,263.4 [One Million, Two Hundred, Sixty-Three Thousand, Four Hundred dollars] in Appropriated Special Fund (ASF) spending authority; and
- \$26,434.7 [Twenty-Six Million, Four Hundred, Thirty-Four Thousand, Seven Hundred dollars] in Non-Appropriated Special Funds (NSF).



Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share some of our Division's accomplishments, challenges and vision for the next year.

I am happy to answer any questions.