



## A Message from the Jackson County Board of Social Services

The Jackson County Department of Social Services is a client-oriented agency that serves all age groups from infancy to the elderly. We are responsive and sensitive to the needs of the citizens of our community, and careful to meet our responsibilities to taxpayers by serving our constituency through cost-effective methods.

We are dedicated to a team approach that offers services in the most efficient and effective way possible, ensuring that all citizens receive professional and courteous service.

This annual report summarizes Jackson County activities and trends for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023, and shows the broad range of services provided by the agency and the number of clients served. It is a voluntary effort to be transparent with the public funds entrusted to this Department.



*(Left) JCDSS staff participated in Hands on Jackson Project, annual event where community volunteers provide assistance across the county to help folks who need a hand.*

*(Right) JCDSS staff participated in United Christian Ministries Non-Food Drive, collected \$250 worth of items.*

## Contacts

### Main Office

15 Griffin St., Sylva, NC 28779  
(Off NC 116, Webster Rd., Behind Lowes Home Improvement)

### Hours

Mon.-Fri., 8am-5pm

### Telephone

828-586-5546

### After Hours Emergency

828-586-1911

### Fax

Public Assistance Programs:  
828-586-6270

All Other Services: 828-587-2099

### Web

[www.jcdss.org](http://www.jcdss.org) (To apply for benefits use site listed below)

### Cherokee Office

1526 Acquoni Rd.,  
Cherokee, NC 28719  
(Near the Cherokee Expo Center)

### Hours

Mon.-Fri., 7:45am-4:30pm

### Telephone

828-497-4317

### Fax

828-497-6916

To apply for North Carolina benefits and services, including:

- Cash Assistance
  - Energy Assistance
  - Food & Nutrition Svcs.
  - Medicaid
- }
- GO TO: [www.epass.nc.gov](http://www.epass.nc.gov)**

## A Tribute to Polly Buchanan



*Polly Buchanan*

This Annual report is dedicated to the service and memory of Joan "Polly" Buchanan.

Joan began working as a Processing Assistant for Jackson County Department of Social Services in October of 2001.

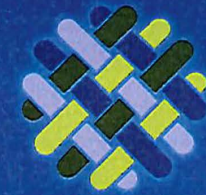
She steadily climbed into the position of Administrative Officer in August of 2016. This position is responsible for helping the

Director develop the annual budget and helping all the staff stay within those financial guidelines. The budget of DSS is a complicated animal and it requires careful attention to detail and a firm hand to keep everything balanced. Joan had both in spades.

Joan worked hard, even when she didn't have to and worked often when her health should have prevented her from being in the office. She was dependable and honest. She knew the work we do here at DSS is meaningful and important to our community.

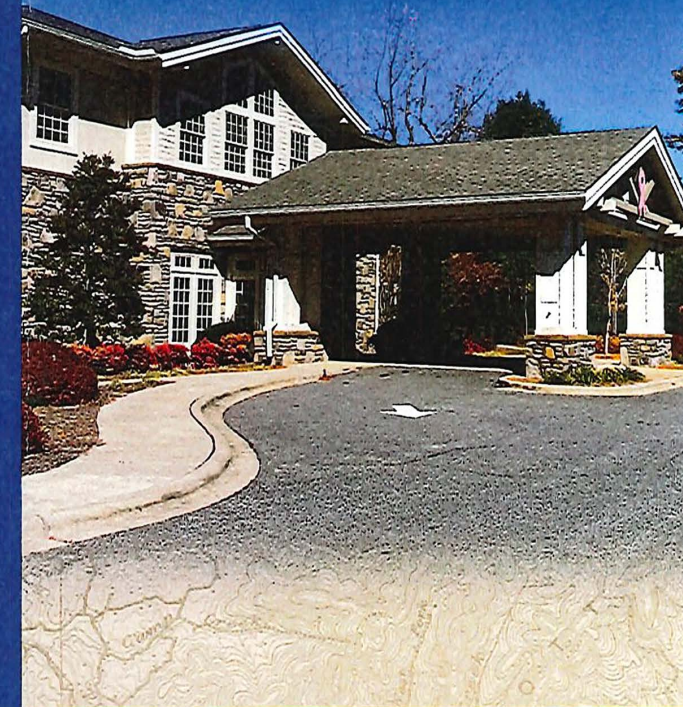
Joan struggled her whole life with her health and we know now that she is at peace and playing and laughing and doing all the things her worldly limitations would not allow. We miss her and we thank her for all she did for this agency and the community.

## Jackson County North Carolina



Department of Social Services

*Strengthening Our Community*



## Annual Report 2023

# Our Year in Service

## Children



### Child Protective Services

Reports of suspected child abuse, neglect and/or dependency are investigated. Services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Assistance is provided to other counties to ensure safety of children.

**665** Responses to Reports of Abuse, Neglect and/or Dependency

**94** Out-of-County Assists and Home Studies

**80** nights spent by agency staff at the agency providing 9 foster children with a safe place to live

**HIGHLIGHT!**  
\$10,000 lump sum payment collected by one of our Child Support Agents



### Child Support Services

Assures that children receive adequate parental support by locating non-custodial parents, establishing paternity, establishing medical and financial support, and modifying and enforcing court ordered support obligations.

**833** Active Cases

**39** Paternities Established

**73** New Support Orders

**71** Support Orders Modified

**296** Implemented Income Withholdings

**2,398** Enforcement Actions Completed

Total Collections \$1,793,815.01

County Returns & Incentives Earned \$32,937

### In-Home Services

Protects children in families where abuse and/or neglect are found. Social Workers engage families in activities designed to reduce risk, promote stability and bring about permanence for children.

**28** Families Served

**56** Children Served

### Work First Family Assistance Program

Employment program for families with children living in the home. Child-only benefits are available to eligible non-parent relatives caring for minor children.

**55** Applications Received

**121** Average Monthly Cases

### Foster Care Services

Children are placed in the responsibility of the agency through court ordered custody, voluntary placement agreements, or release for adoption. Permanency planning for children provides time-limited and goal-oriented care for children to achieve permanent families as soon as possible.

**67** Children in Agency Custody  
As of 7/1/22

**37** Children Entered Custody  
Through 6/30/23

**16** Children Left Custody:

- 3 Transferred to Another County
- 3 Custody Dissolved
- 2 Returned to Parents
- 2 Guardianship/Custody to Others
- 2 Children Adopted
- 4 Children Aged Out

**88** Children Remained in Agency Custody  
As of 6/30/23

### Adoptions

Adoption provides children with permanency in safe, loving homes. Adoptions include agency adoptions, stepparent and independent adoptions, and independent adoptions arranged between birth parents and unrelated individuals.

**2** Agency Adoptions Finalized

**11** Agency Child Clearances for Adoption

**35** Families Received Assistance for 54 Children to Help Offset the Cost of Adopting a Child with Disabilities or Special Needs

**4** Children and 1 Family Received Guardianship Assistance

## Adult Protective



### Adult Protective Service Evaluations

Reports of suspected abuse, neglect and/or exploitation are evaluated, and assessments are completed regarding the needs of disabled individuals 18 and older. Services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**236** Responses to Reports of Abuse, Neglect and/or Exploitation

### Guardianship Services

The Court appoints Social Services as guardian for elderly or disabled adults who are mentally incompetent and cannot make responsible decisions concerning their personal care or their finances.

**38** Guardianship Clients Served

### Protective Payee Services

Social Services is appointed by the Court, Social Security, Veterans Administration to receive and assure the appropriate use of benefit funds when individuals are unable to do so.

**24** Payee Clients Served

# General

6,154 more  
our agency

## Shelter/Utility Assistance

The Crisis Intervention Program, Low-Income Energy Assistance, Work First Emergency Assistance, Duke Energy, Energy Neighbor, Emergency Food and Shelter Program, and Helping Each Member Cope are programs to assist people in an energy/shelter crisis. Together these seven programs accomplished the following:

1,971	Households Served
\$331,260.40	Total Payments
\$380.75	Avg. Payment

## Program Integrity/Fraud Investigations

Public assistance cases are routinely investigated to assure accuracy and to address discrepancies. Repayment of benefits is pursued in cases of fraud and overpayment.

### 40 Cases Investigated

\$350.00
\$1,615.42
\$1,965.42
\$11,350.00

Medicaid Repayments
Food & Nutrition Services Repayments
Total Repayments
Dollar Amount for Claims Established

## General Assistance

Assistance for families in a crisis situation  
**354 Households Served @ \$135.17 Avg. Payment**  
**Total: \$47,842.11**

## Processing Support Services

10,240	Clients Seen in the Agency
11,639	Pieces of Regular Mail
384	Incoming Pieces of Courier Mail
19,248	Outgoing Pieces of Regular Mail
15	Outgoing Pieces of Courier Mail

# Health Related

## Medicaid/Special Assistance

**Medicaid provides** assistance with medical expenses for low income families with children, disabled adults, the elderly and other special populations.

**Special Assistance** provides a monthly payment to help pay the cost of facility placement or in-home care.

1,749 Applications Received

4,396 Reviews Completed

## Food & Nutrition Services

Designed to raise the nutritional levels in low-income households by providing food assistance to supplement a household's food dollars.

2,357 Applications Received

1,373 Reviews

2,624 Avg. Monthly Cases

*A satellite office in Cherokee also provides Food and Nutrition Services and Medicaid.*

## Health Choice for Children

North Carolina Health Choice provides medical assistance to uninsured children when the family income is at or below 200% of federal poverty level.

346 Active Cases  
Through 6/30/23

## Medical Transportation

Transportation to medical appointments is provided, arranged or reimbursed for individuals who are eligible for this service.

1,072 Clients Transported

4,078 Number of Trips Provided

\$32,315.71 Payments to Clients  
\$308,487.72 Payments to Providers

**Providers**  
 \$48,111.26 Jackson County Transit  
 \$56,245.00 EBCI Transit  
 \$26,194.38 Freedom Taxi Service  
 \$168,562.08 Mtn. Area Transport  
 \$9,375.00 Flying Feathers Car Service

## Services for the Blind

Assistance is provided to visually impaired clients through Independent Living (IL) Services. The Medical Eye Care Assistance program assists with eyeglasses, vision related surgery referrals to other programs and funding is available.

## Independent Living Institute

- 20 Clients Received
- 13 New Clients Received
- 11 Case Closures for Clients
- 6 Medical Eye Care Clinics Served
- 5 Clients Referred to Resources for Assistance

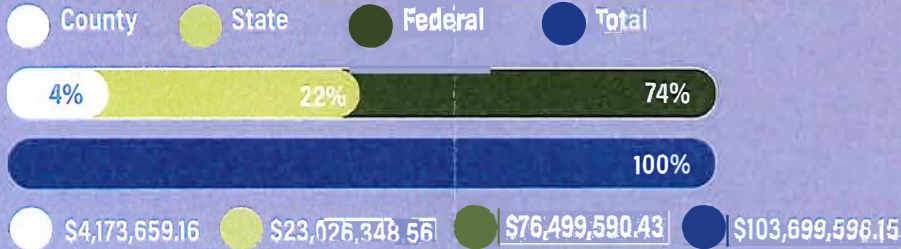


### A JUMP UP

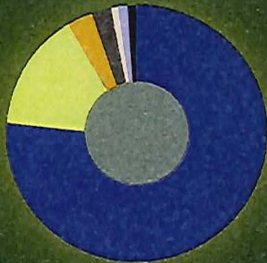
520 more Food and Nutrition Services (SNAP) applications than last year.

# Revenues & Expenditures

## How We Were Funded in 2022-23



## Our Expenditures in 2022-23



### Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Medicaid Payments	\$80,755,455.00
Food & Nutrition	\$14,016,294.00
Public Assistance Administration <i>(Medicaid, Work First Family Assistance, Food &amp; Nutrition Services, Special Assistance)</i>	\$2,897,413.37
Social Work Services	\$2,478,036.48
Work First	\$1,470,265.08
Emergency Crisis Assistance <i>(Low Income Energy Assistance, Fuel, Shelter, Utilities, Medicine)</i>	\$258,124.44

### Other Expenditures Include

Foster Care	\$1,037,855.63
Child Support Services	\$486,493.20
Special Assistance <i>(Adult Care Payments)</i>	\$280,778.00
In-Home Services <i>(Adult Day Care, Aide Services, Home Delivered Meals)</i>	\$7,026.78
Adult Guardianship	\$12,136.17

**Total \$103,699,878.15**



## News From Our Department



### In 2023, Jackson County DSS Staff:

Collected 25 boxes, 5 gift bags, plus numerous other items for the elderly for Christmas. *(pictured above)*

Participated in United Christian Ministries Walk 4 Jesus Walkathon Fundraiser, which raised over \$4,000. Did an auction and door prize themed baskets. *(pictured below)*



Child Support staff raised \$310 in support of the Bob Scholastic Scholarship, awarded to deserving high school seniors in the North Carolina Child Support Program or are affiliates of the North Carolina Child Support Council.