

# DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



# The Department for Children & Families

**Serves approximately 170,000 people**

**or**

**Approximately 1 in 4 Vermonters**



# Our Vision



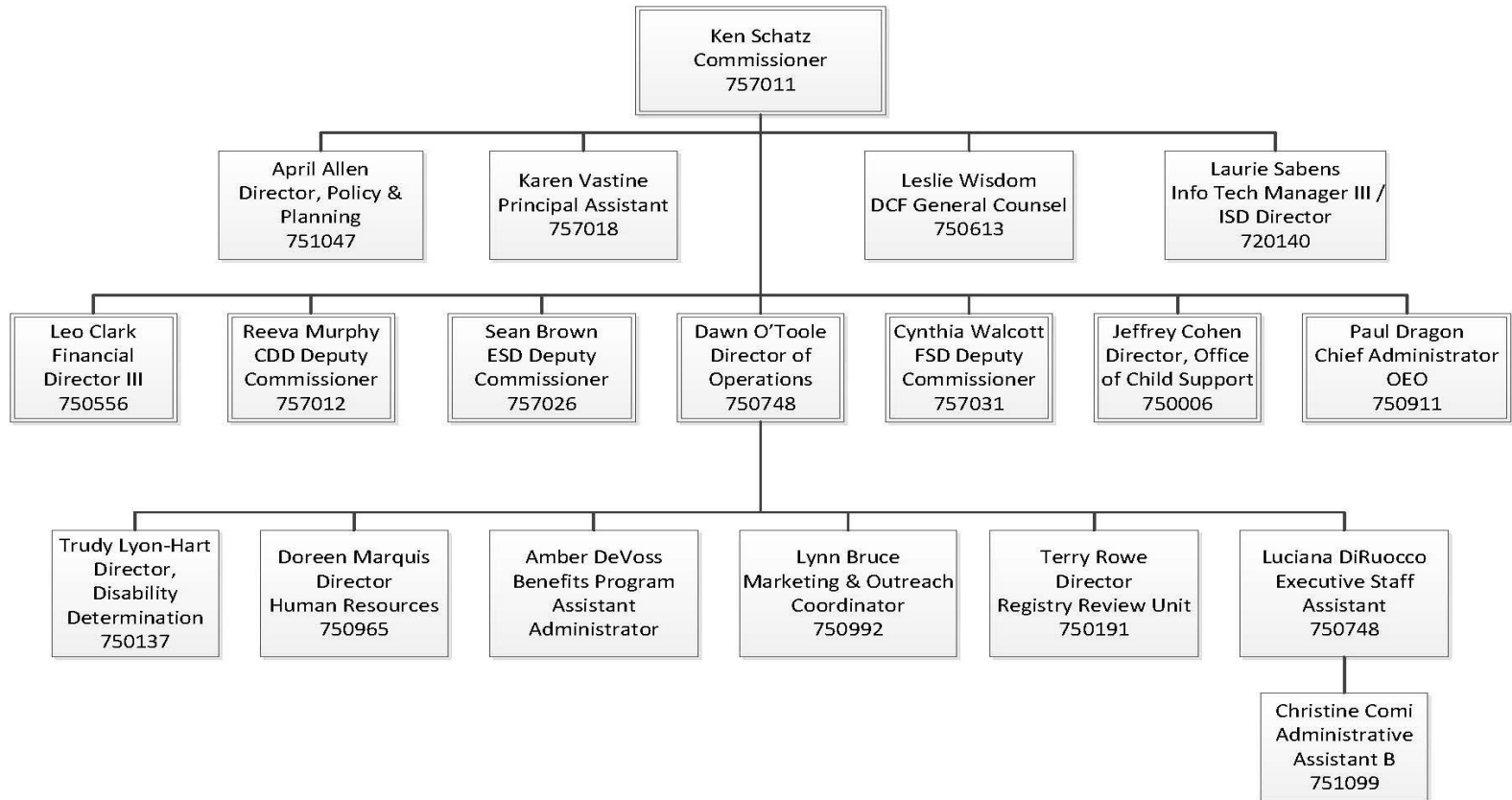
**Vermont is a place where people prosper; children and families are safe and have strong, loving connections; and individuals have the opportunity to fully develop their potential.**

# Our Mission

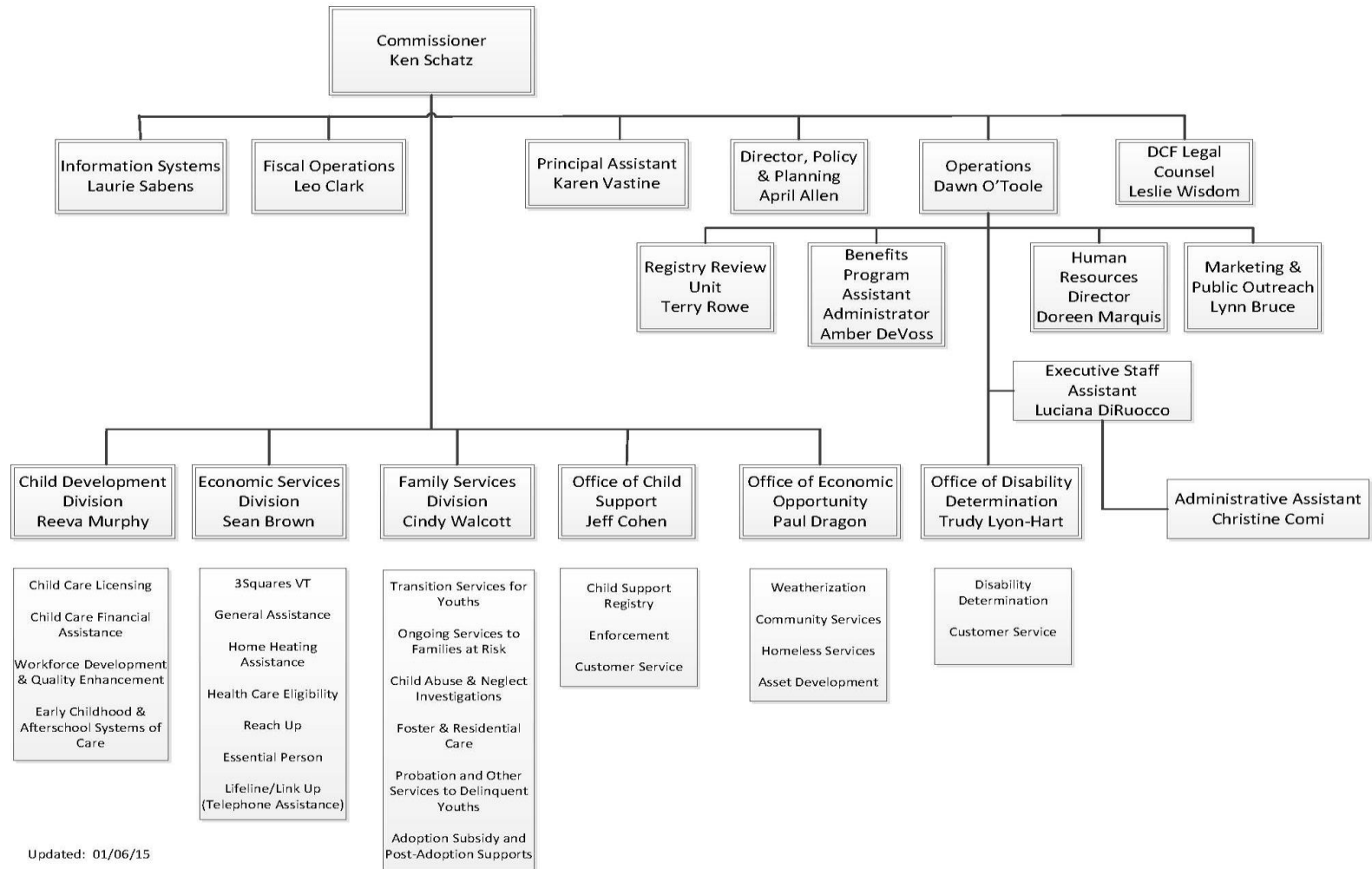
**The Department for Children and Families, as part of an integrated Agency of Human Services, fosters the healthy development, safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency of Vermonters.**



# DCF Organizational Chart



# DCF Organizational Chart II





# Child Development Division (CDD)



# Clients

- Children from prenatal – age 6 and their families
- Children 6 – 13 in after school programs
- Early childhood and afterschool programs and professionals





# **Programs & Services**

- **Child Care Licensing**
- **Child Care Financial Assistance Program**
- **EC & AS Quality & Workforce Development**
- **Children's Integrative Services (CIS)**

# What We're Working On



- 3 Year Strategic Plan
- CIS full integration
- CC regulation revisions
- Strengthening Families
- Prekindergarten implementation
- Customer service & communication
- Focus on outcomes
- Race to the Top Grant

# Economic Services Division



Helping low income Vermonters  
meet their basic needs

# The Many Programs of ESD:

- ~ Health Care (HAEU) plus Vermont Health Connect
- ~ 3SquaresVT (SNAP)
- ~ Reach Up, Reach First, and Reach Ahead (RU,RF, and RA)
- ~ General and Emergency Assistance (GA and EA)
- ~ Fuel Assistance (LIHEAP)
- ~ Essential Persons (EP)
- ~ Phone Assistance (Lifeline)
- ~ Utility Assistance (UDEU)



ESD is so large and we provide support for many Vermonters, we have the Benefits Service Center (Call Center) to help manage the workload. They receive between 35,000 to 40,000 calls per month.

We also have the Application Document Processing Center (aka the ADPC). They mail out 8,000 to 10,000 reviews and applications per month and scan and index over 400,000 pages. In addition they are also processing all Vermont Health Connect applications as they come in.



Last year the State of Vermont issued the following benefits to the 1 in 4 Vermonters in need of assistance:



\$148 million in food benefits.



\$22 million in fuel benefits.



\$8 million in general assistance benefits.



\$40 million in TANF benefits.



\$97 million in health care benefits.

# How to apply for ESD programs

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Through the web at [mybenefits.vt.gov](https://mybenefits.vt.gov) or for just Health Care at <https://portal.healthconnect.vermont.gov>



Many of our Community Partners also have access to applications and can help Vermonters apply for assistance



Web based Kiosks at any of the 12 District Offices



Request an application through the Benefits Service Center at 1-800-479-6151



Department for Children and Families–Family Services Division  
Child Welfare and Youth Justice



# Outcome Focus

**Safety is our paramount concern.**

## **Permanency**

- Return home, Adoption, Guardianship
  - Timely
  - Safe

## **Well-being**

- Measured by health, mental health and school success.

## **Law abidance**

- Youth are free from delinquent behavior



# Family Services Division

- 12 District Offices
- 160 District Social Workers
- Direct Service Units in Central Office
  - Residential/Foster Care Licensing
  - Centralized Intake
  - Special Investigations
  - Emergency Services Program
- Woodside
  - Only locked juvenile facility in Vermont–30 beds
- Central Office
  - Provides support to the field, oversees policy and practice, manages budgets, grants and contracts, maintains communication with federal partners



# Child Abuse and Neglect: Investigations & Assessments

Specialized social work staff conduct child abuse investigations and assessments, with primary focus on the immediate safety of children.

- Districts conduct most assessments.
- Special Investigations Unit focuses on regulated facilities and schools.



5,135 in 2013\*  
5,841 in 2014\*

*\*Source: 2013 Child Protection Report*

# Family Support Cases

District social workers provide services to families who are at high risk for child abuse and neglect. This support is targeted at the reduction of risk and the promotion of protective capacities.

411 families point in time in 2013

421 families point in time Dec 2014

# Children in DCF Foster Care

- **Reasons for foster care:**
  - Abuse/Neglect
  - Child Behavior
  - Delinquency
- **Numbers are increasing**
  - From 1,022 on 12/31/2013 to 1,186 on 11/30/2014
    - 20% rise in 1 year, including a 37% rise for children under 6.
- Extended care option to age 22 which provides support for housing and/or incidental expenses.

# Placement Statistics

as of June 30, 2014

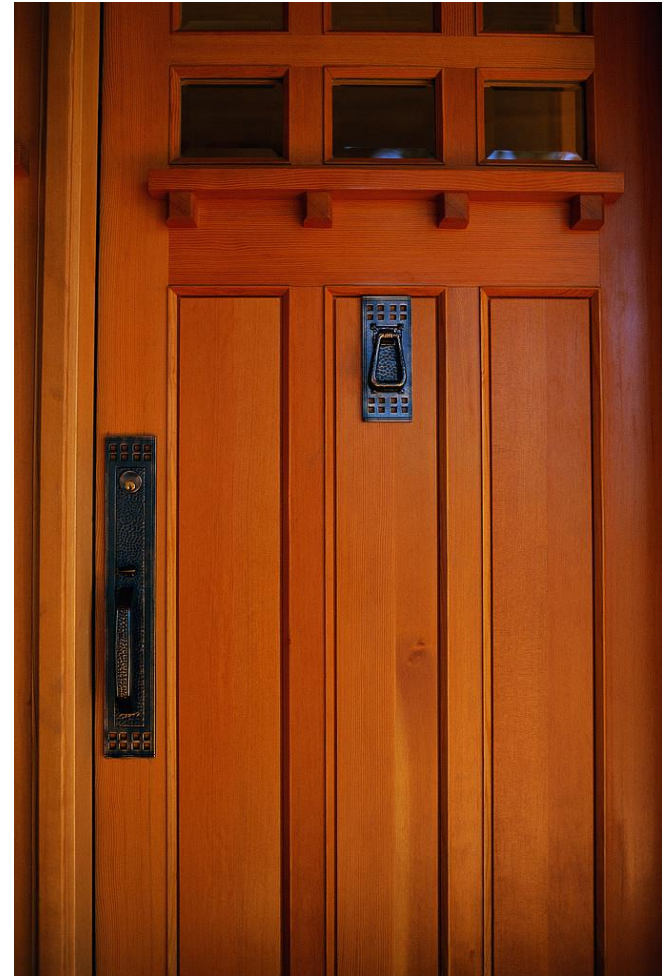
Foster Care ~42%

Kin Care ~28%

Residential Care ~13%

Institutions ~2%

Independent Living ~2%



# Youth Justice

Unlike child protection agencies in most other states, FSD also serves as the state's youth justice agency. In this role, we:

- Work with youth whose own behaviors put them at risk;
- Supervise youth who are on probation for committing delinquent acts;
- Assess youth to determine their challenges and strengths;
- Place youth in temporary out-of-home care when necessary;
- Work with the youth and parents towards their safe return home; and
- Find permanent homes for youth who cannot safely return home, preferably with extended family members or known connections.

**Social workers are NOT probation officers—rather they are social workers who are tasked by Vermont statute with overseeing probation conditions as set by the court.**

Social workers supervised 118 youth (point in time) in 2014

# Current Practice Focus

- Safety, first and foremost.
- Family Engagement as a tool to build safety.
  - Family Safety Planning, Family Group Conferencing, Family Time Coaching, Family Finding.
- Learning Culture
  - Use of teaming and group supervision to support good decision-making.





# Disability Determination Services

## Determining medical eligibility for

### ❖ *Social Security Disability (SSDI)*

- ✓ Must have worked and paid FICA tax

### ❖ *Supplemental Security Income (SSI)*

- ✓ Must meet low income/resource limits

### ❖ *Medicaid*

- ✓ Adults who must be found disabled to qualify
- ✓ Children under Katie Beckett waiver

# **DDS Mission:**

**To provide all applicants with**

- ❖ *Accurate decisions following Social Security statute, regulations, and policy*
- ❖ *Completed promptly and cost effectively*
- ❖ *With full and fair consideration of each applicant's situation, respect and compassion for individual concerns*

# Statutory Basis: Federal Social Security Act

## Unique Federal/State Partnership

- ❖ State authority for medical decisions
- ❖ 100% federal funding
- ❖ Federal direction & oversight
  - *Accuracy & Timeliness*
  - *Budgeted Workload & Staffing*
  - *Federal Confidentiality Rules*

# DDS Outcomes FY 2014

- ❖ **Initial Case Performance Accuracy – 97.2%**  
*- In the top 6 nationally*
- ❖ **Initial Net Accuracy (10/13 - 7/14) – 99.1%%**  
*- In top 3 nationally*
- ❖ **Average Processing Time – 62 days**  
*- 4<sup>th</sup> fastest in the nation for SSDI; 3<sup>rd</sup> for SSI*
- ❖ **Budget and Total Workload Targets Met**
- ❖ **Initial Allowance rate – 43%** *(National is 32%)*

# Office of Economic Opportunity

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Partnering to develop local  
solutions to end poverty



# Our Mission

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Working in partnership with the private sector, community-based organizations, government agencies, and others to

- Increase self-sufficiency of Vermonters
- Strengthen Vermont communities
- Eliminate the causes & symptoms of poverty

# Poverty & Homelessness in Vt

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**About 1 in 8 Vermonters living below the poverty level (12%) – that’s about 74,000 people. Rate is higher for:**

Children (15%), Families with children (13%), Single moms w/ kids (36%)

**Nearly 1 in 3 Vermonters are low income (30.4% < 200% FPL) – includes those working, but often not making enough to get by**

**Nearly 1 in 6 Vermont families are “asset poor” (15.7%), not enough to get by for 3 months without income**

**On any given night, 344 people are staying in a shelter, including 93 kids**

\$23,550 – US Federal Poverty Guideline, Family of 4

\$41,160 – “Housing Wage” to afford 2 bedroom apartment in Vermont

\$77,542 – Vt Liveable Wage (2 working adults, 2 children)

# How We Work

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- Manage programs and grants
- Training and technical assistance
- Identify & develop resources
- Advocate for community partners
- Connect communities to resources



# Weatherization

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Warmer, safer and more energy efficient homes

Putting \$\$ back in the pockets of low income Vermonters

- **Energy audit** to identify where improvements can be made
- **Energy renovation** (e.g., insulation, sealing up drafts, improving ventilation)
- **Coaching** on energy saving best practices
- **Heating system** upgrades & replacements



# Our Partners – Our Impact

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- 5,000 homes weatherized in the last 3 years
- 433 faulty heating systems repaired or replaced at no charge
- 417 unemployed low income Vermonters secured a job
- 11,000 households received housing help
- 144+ businesses started and grew, creating 114.5 FTE jobs
- 4,251 people without housing were sheltered
- 48,573 people received food when they could not afford groceries
- 190 people saved \$150,000+ through an IDA or other account
- 60 low income Vermonters invested \$133,000+ in their first home, business or higher education
- Prepared taxes for 2,924 households to make sure they receive all credits & refunds due, accessing over \$4.1 million in refunds

*DCF New Worker Orientation*

# *Office of Child Support*



# Why Child Support?



Almost **40%** of Vermont children born to unwed parents



More than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of all kids will live in a **single parent household** at some point



Average cost of raising a child in low income family: **\$250,000**



# OCS Mission



The Office of Child Support works to improve children's economic security by:



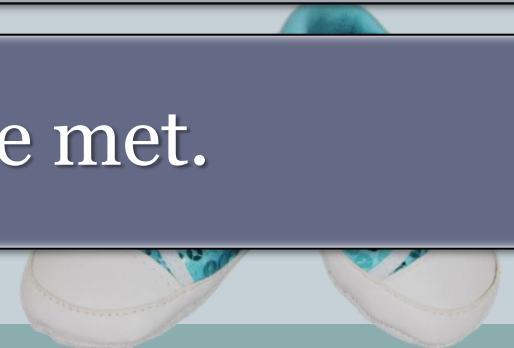
Establishing parentage,



Establishing child support and medical obligations, and



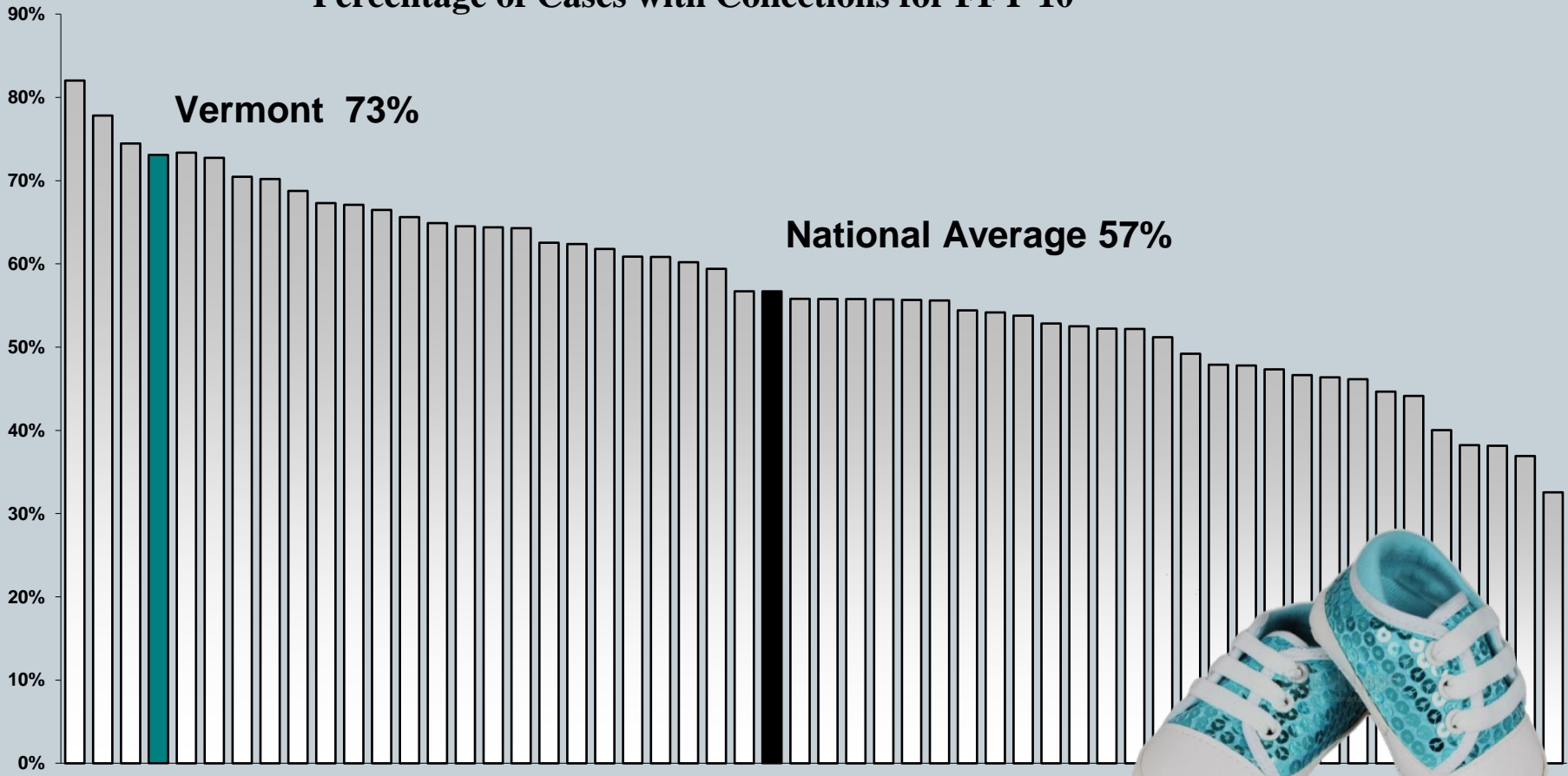
Ensuring obligations are met.



# How is Vermont Doing?



**Percentage of Cases with Collections for FFY'10**



# How do we do it?



Locate Actions



Genetic Testing



Child Support Guidelines



Wage Withholding, Admin intercepts, Liens, etc



Civil Court Actions



Criminal Non Support

