



VERMONT

**AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Dr. Harry Chen, Interim Commissioner

2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



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 is to foster the healthy development, safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency of Vermonters.

Department for Children and Families

1,100 Employees

Family
Services
Division
(FSD)

Child
Development
Division
(CDD)

Office of Child
Support
(OCS)

Economic
Services
Division
(ESD)

Office of
Economic
Opportunity
(OEO)

Disability
Determination
Services
(DDS)

Family Services Division (FSD)

Child Welfare & Juvenile Justice

FSD's primary focus as a Division is child safety and law abidance for youth and emerging adults. We engage with, and work alongside family, foster parents, partner agencies and the community to achieve the best outcomes that we can for the children and youth in our care and custody.

Aryka Radke, JD, Deputy Commissioner

FSD MISSION

We engage families, foster and kin caregivers, partner agencies, and the community to increase safety and law abidance for Vermont's children and youth.

We achieve our mission by working with families to:

- Keep children and youth safe,
- Keep youth free from harmful behaviors,

And if that is not possible:

- Caring for children and youth in DCF or conditional custody and attending to their well-being, while working towards safe reunification.

And if that is not possible:

- Achieving other forms of permanency for children and youth in DCF or conditional custody by providing them with safe, supportive, lifelong connections.

Four Key Outcomes

Safety

Permanence: timely, safe

- Return home
- Adoption
- Guardianship

Well-being

- Measured by health, mental health, and school success.

Law abidance

- Youth are free from unlawful behavior

FSD Structure

District Offices

- 12 throughout state
- 180 Family Services Workers plus other staff

State-wide Direct Service Units

- Centralized Intake: Child Protection Hotline and after-hours emergency response
- Residential Licensing and Special Investigations Unit

Central Office

- Provides support to district offices, oversees policy and practice, manages budgets, grants and contracts, and maintains communication with federal partners

Child Development Division (CDD)

Works with partners to provide Vermonters with affordable access to high-quality child care and child development services.

Miranda Gray, Deputy Commissioner

Programs & Services

- Child Care Licensing
- Child Care Financial Assistance Program (subsidy)
- Early Childhood and Afterschool Program Quality and Workforce supports
- Children's Integrated Services
- Head Start Collaboration Office
- Universal Prekindergarten Oversight

Who We Serve

- **1,079** Child Care, Preschool, and Afterschool Programs
- **47** Approved Relative Child Care Providers
- **7800+** Early childhood and afterschool professionals
- **4,000 – 6,000+** Families receiving Child Care Financial Assistance
- **5,000 – 6,000** families served yearly through Children's Integrated Services

Noteworthy Projects

QRIS - STARS

CDDIS

Capacity Building

Child Care
Business Technical
Assistance

Quality Coaching &
Support Services

Child Care
Licensing
Regulation
Revision

PROGRAMS RUN	SPENT/PROJECTED
Child Care Business Stabilization Funding	\$ 8,559,102
Essential Person Child Care & Incentive	\$ 5,748,548
Restart Stipends	\$ 6,608,605
Hazard Pay (Through DFR)	\$ 754,000
Organizational Relief Grant Program	\$ 11,802,373
Hubs and CCFAP Tuition	\$ 3,328,583
Child Care Workforce Stabilization	\$ 3,977,408
CRRSA	\$ 12,228,305
ARPA Child Care Stabilization	\$ 29,332,561
ARPA Discretionary Funds	\$ 18,839,732
Child Care Workforce Retention Bonuses	\$ 7,000,000
Total	\$ 108,179,217

CDD's Response To COVID-19

Office of Child Support (OCS)

Responsible for establishing parentage, and establishing, collecting, enforcing, and modifying child support and medical support orders for children who do not live with one or both parents.

Lisa Rivers, Director

Our Mission

The Vermont Office of Child Support promotes the well-being of all families by strengthening their financial safety net. We provide quality services and information to parents, caregivers, and community partners involved in the child support process.

Studies show that receipt of child support

- Increases economic independence of parents
- Reduces child poverty
- Reduces reliance on public assistance benefits
- Encourages parents to exit and remain off public assistance
- Increases parental involvement of paying parents

OCS Programs

OCS is a state program that is 66% federally funded

Statewide presence with 109 full-time employees

- Five regional offices, delivering front-line services with an emphasis on helping parents navigate the court system; and Central Office staff that include the Customer Service Unit, Intercept Unit, Central Registry, Intergovernmental Unit, Locate Unit, and Cash Receipts Unit

For more information about OCS: visit <https://dcf.vermont.gov/ocs>

Who We Serve and Our Partners

WHO WE SERVE

Parents who pay support

Parents who receive support

Guardians

Parents in other states who are seeking assistance through the Vermont court process

OUR PARTNERS

Economic Services

Family Services

Department of
Corrections

Vermont Judiciary

Employers

Hireability Vermont

Vermont
Association of
Business, Industry
and Rehabilitation

EAP

VT Network against
Domestic and
Sexual Violence

Economic Services Division(ESD)

Provides economic benefits to Vermonters in need. Provides a safety net for individuals and families who may be experiencing unemployment, underemployment, single parenthood, aging, disability, the death of a family member or other life-changing events.

Andy Lange, Economic Benefits Director

Nicole Tousignant, Economic Benefits Director

Approximately 350 staff located across the state

- 12 district offices, co-located with other AHS district offices

ADO—St Albans

LDO—Brattleboro

SDO—Springfield

BDO—Burlington

MDO—Barre

TDO—Bennington

HDO—Hartford

NDO—Newport

VDO—Morrisville

JDO—St.

RDO--Rutland

YDO--Middlebury

Johnsbury

- Program eligibility staff and Reach-up case managers located at district offices

Central Office

- Includes operations, program teams, training, administrative services, quality control, fraud, process and performance, business application support unit

ESD Benefits Service Center (BSC) Call Center

Application & Document Processing Center (ADPC)

ESD Programs

3SquaresVT (SNAP)

- Helps eligible Vermonters to stretch their food budgets and put three healthy meals on their tables every day. Program also provides support with employment and training, farm to table, and nutrition education.

General and Emergency Assistance (GA/EA)

- Helps eligible individuals and families meet their emergency and basic needs. This includes: personal needs, room and board, fuel, utilities, medical, dental, prescriptions, medical supplies, burial costs, and housing. The Vermont Rental Assistance Program is a part of GA and provides a short-term rent subsidy.

Fuel Assistance (LIHEAP)

- Helps eligible Vermonters heat their homes by paying part of their home heating bills. Crisis heating assistance, water and wastewater assistance, and a utility discount assistance are also available.

Reach Up (TANF)

- Helps stabilize families experiencing deep poverty by providing case management, financial assistance, and support services. Childcare assistance, employment services, and post secondary education is also provided.

Pandemic Related Programs

Transitional Housing Program

- Provides homeless Vermonters with a hotel room for up to 18 months. As of 11/1, approximately 1500 households are housed under this program.

Pandemic E-BT

- Provides a cash benefit for school-aged children who do not receive school lunch due to COVID related absences. \$81m has been distributed to Vermont households under this program

Maximum Allotment

- Provides an increase 3SQ benefit to bring households up to the maximum benefit level for their household size. Approximately \$6.5m in supplemental benefits each month.

Reach Up Emergency Rental Assistance

- Covers a household's monthly rent for up to 18 months. Approximately \$17m in rental benefits have been provided to date.

Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)

Partners with community organizations, private sector, government agencies and others on solutions to solve poverty

Sarah Phillips, Director

- Administers grant programs – often times core funding for organizations
- Provides training and technical assistance
- Identifies and develops resources for communities
- Focus on results and performance accountability
- Promotes approaches informed by evidence and research to improve policy and practice

Main Program Areas

Community Action Agencies

(Core Funding)

Homeless Assistance

- Emergency Shelter and Services
- Homelessness Prevention
- Rapid Re-housing
- Coordinated Entry
- Family Supportive Housing

Weatherization Plus

- Home Weatherization, incl Multi-Family
- Plus: Heat Pumps, Efficient Stoves, Home Repair, Asbestos Remediation
- Emergency Heating System Repair & Replacement

Financial Empowerment

- Micro Business Development Program
- Financial Coaching

OEO by the Numbers

13 staff administer

More than **\$45m in funding** to Vermont organizations

From **14 federal and other funding sources**

To support more than **60+ community partners**

who reach more than **80,000 low income Vermonters annually**

Reports: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/o eo/resources/reports>

Office of Disability Determination Services (DDS)

Provides applicants with medical eligibility decisions as quickly as possible, as governed by Social Security federal statutes, regulations, and policy.

Jack McCormack, Director

Mission: To provide all applicants with determinations that are accurate, promptly completed, and with full, fair, and compassionate consideration of each applicant's situation and respect and concern for the individual's well-being and legal rights.

DDS is regularly a national leader in accuracy, timeliness, and public service. It regularly meets its workload & service goals within federal budget limits.

DDS Location and Staffing

One State Office in Waterbury staffed with

- ❖ Disability Adjudicators
- ❖ Medical Consultants
- ❖ Disability (Technical) Specialists
- ❖ Other Supporting Staff

DDS Determinations

DDS employees work for a federal program

- SSA rules govern the work
- SSA funds all DDS operations, salaries and benefits, case costs, and indirect costs
- SSA controls DDS budget, workload volume, and staffing
- SSA closely monitors DDS performance against national standards

In Federal Fiscal Year 2022, DDS exceeded all workload targets

- Determinations on 6,815 Social Security disability claims and over 200 Medicaid disability claims
- Processed claims in an average of over 84 days – the fastest in the nation
- Case decisional accuracy of 98.6%, ranking DDS among the top five offices in the nation