

## **DSS Administration**

North Carolina has a system of state-supervised, county-administered departments of social services responsible for the provision of public assistance and social services programs for citizens of North Carolina. Generally, these county departments act as agents of the State under the authorization and supervision of the State Division of Social Services and the NC Department of Health and Human Services. However, County DSS offices are a part of the umbrella of local government and its employees are county employees with the full rights of state employees.

Each county, except Mecklenburg and Wake, has a County Board of Social Services responsible for establishing county policies, in conformity with state rules and regulations. Typically, the Board consists of five members, two chosen by the State Social Services Commission, two chosen by the County Board of Commissioners, and the fifth member selected by the other four members.

Members of the Montgomery County Board of Social Services as of 01-06 are:

- Jim Harris, Chair (Appointed by State Social Services Commission)
- Bertha Cagle, Vice-Chair (Appointed by State Social Services Commission)
- Sally Morris, Member (Appointed by County Commissioners)
- Becky Stegall, Member (Appointed by County DSS Board)
- Shirley Gerald, Member (Appointed by County Commissioners)

Usually, a County Commissioner fills one of the Board of Commissioner slots in order to improve communication and coordination. (Commissioner Sally Morris currently fills this position.) The County Board of Social Services meets monthly in open session to conduct necessary business.

One of the most important rules of the Social Services Board is the selection, oversight, and supervision of the County Department of Social Services Director. The Director, both directly and through staff, administers the programs of the agency. NCGS 108A-14 specifies fourteen duties and responsibilities of the Director, including the hiring of staff.

The Montgomery County Board of Commissioners with input from the County Manager also plays an important role in relation to Social Services. Their primary responsibility is limited to provide adequate facilities and necessary county funds through approval of the County Department of Social Services budget. Social Services programs are financed by a complex, activity/program-specific blend of federal, state, and county funding. Available federal and state funding for various programs range from 100% funded to no financial participation.

The total budget for Social Services for FY 05-06 will exceed \$45 million. Not all of these funds flow through the county budget. The federal government provides approximately 59% of the necessary funding. State government provides approximately 27% and county government approximately 14% of necessary funding.

Over \$35 million of the Social Services budget goes to fund Medicaid. This program provides needed medical insurance to a variety of groups. Most expenditures are for prescribed drugs, and nursing home and hospital care for the elderly and disabled.