



LRC Committee on Omnibus Foster Care and Dependency

Child Welfare Services

The County Perspective



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North Carolina Association of
County Commissioners
March 18, 2014



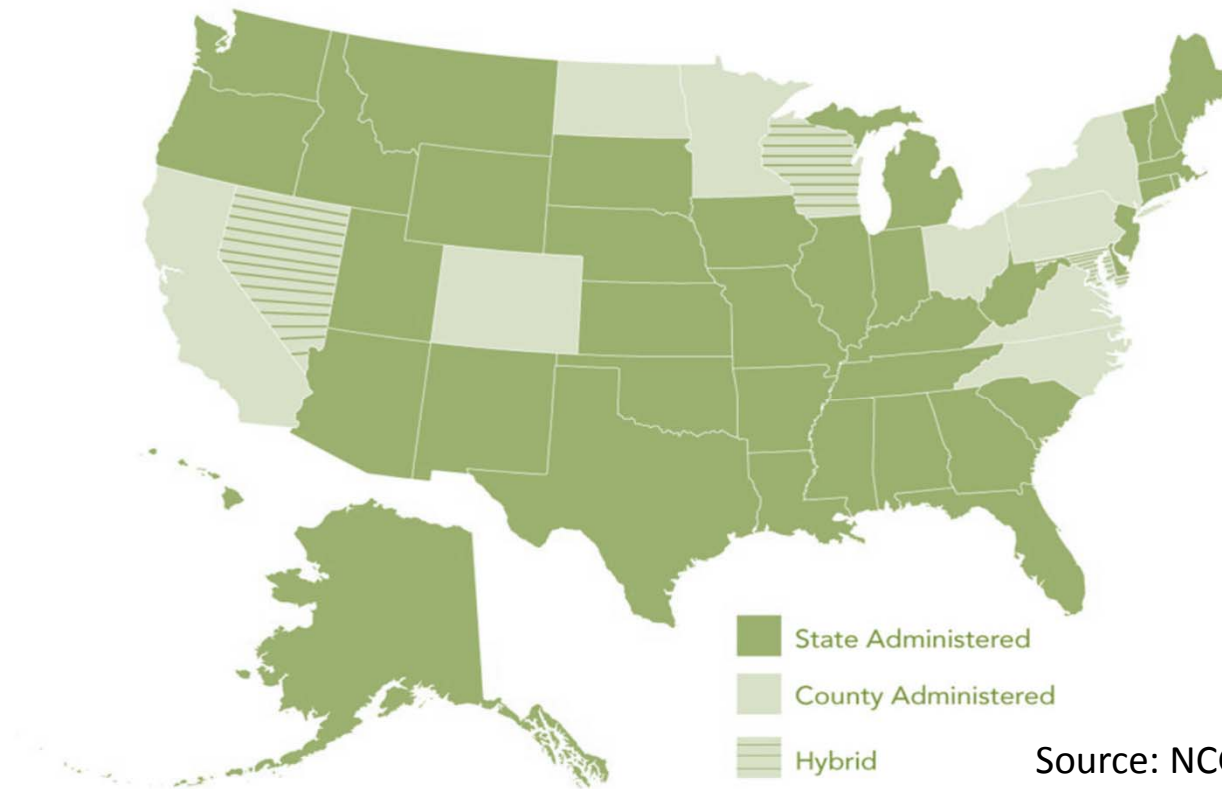


N.C. County Role in Child Welfare Services

- Protecting children is the most critical responsibility of NC counties!
- Why?
 - It's our job
 - County-administered, state supervised system



Most States Provide CPS via State Employees

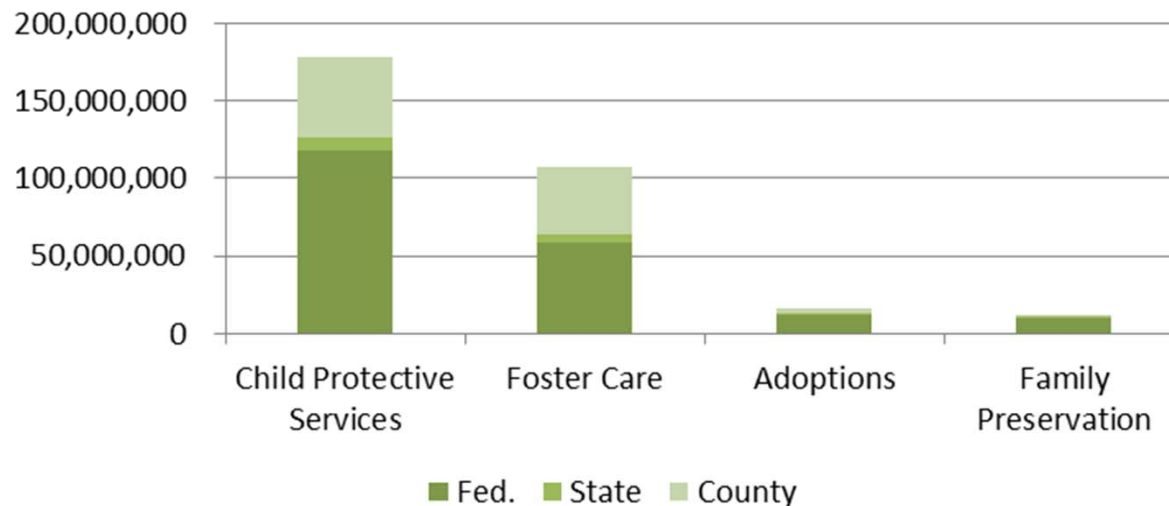


Source: NCGA Fiscal Research



N.C. Child Welfare Administration, County & Federal Funding System

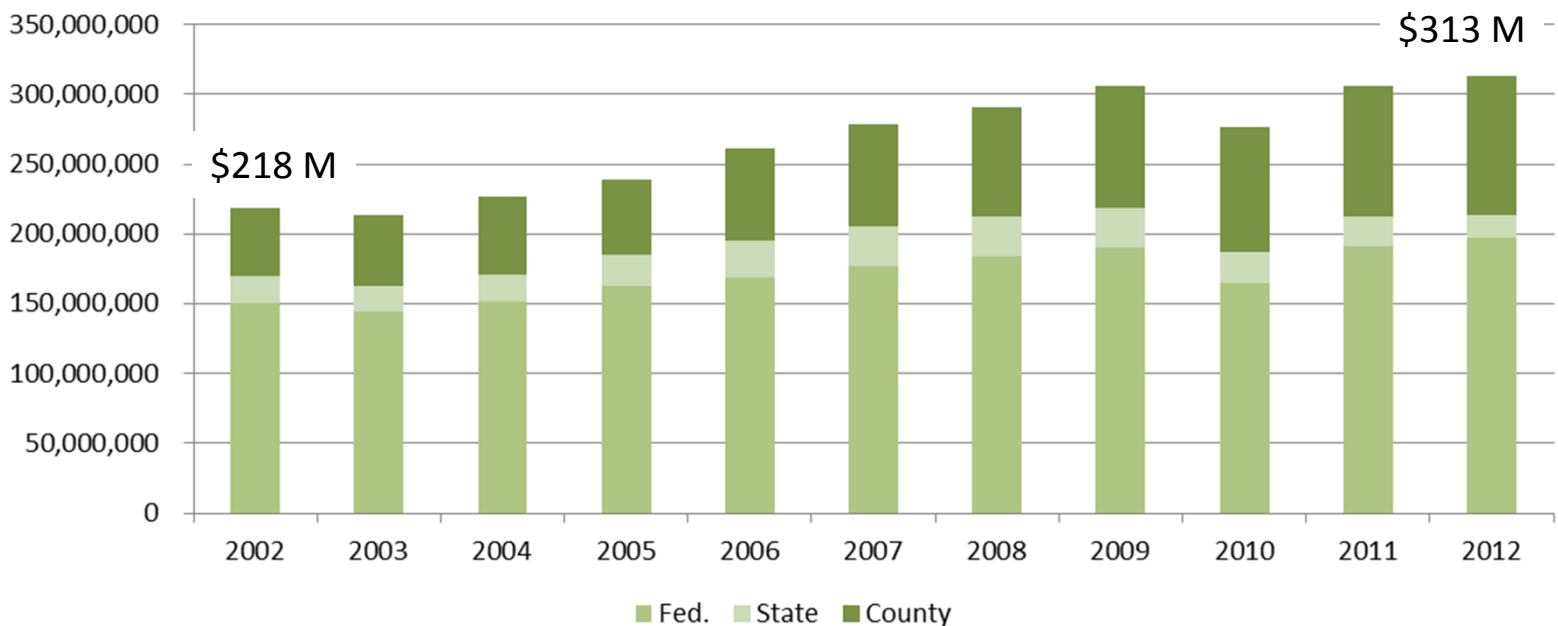
Child Welfare Services, Admin Only, By Source of Funds, 2012





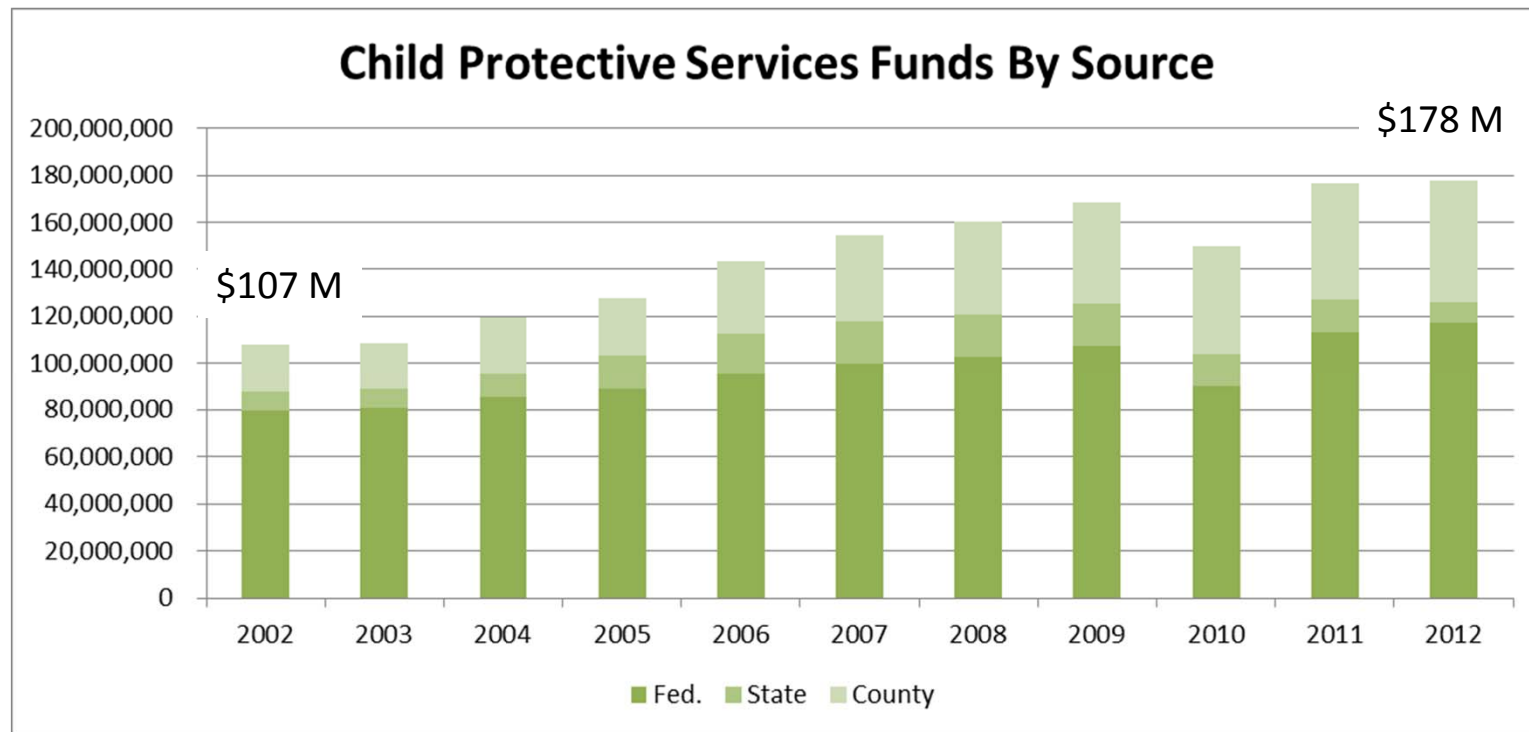
N.C. Child Welfare Administration, County & Federal Funding System

Child Welfare Services, Admin. Only, By Source of Funds





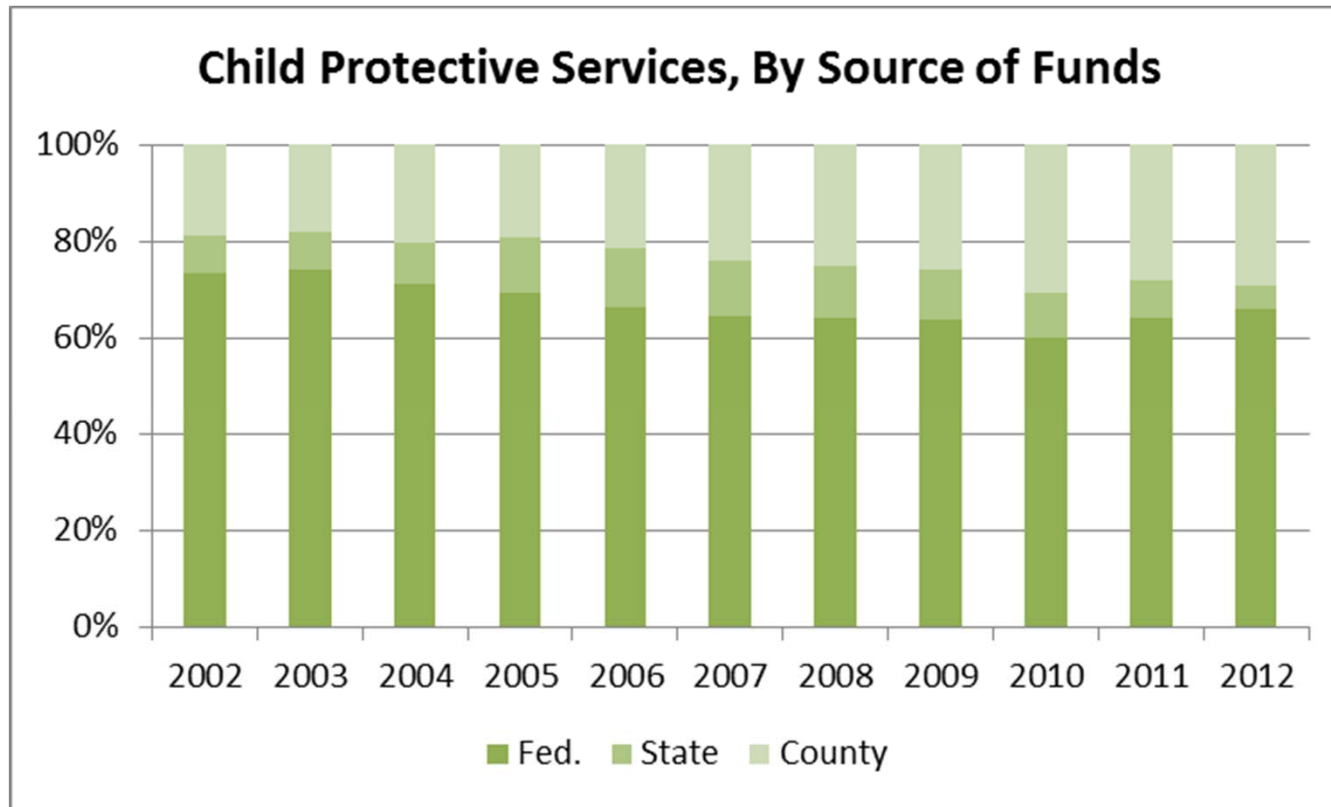
Child Protective Services Largely Fed. & County Funded



Session Law 2011-145 replaced state funding of \$5 million with federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds. NCGA Fiscal Research

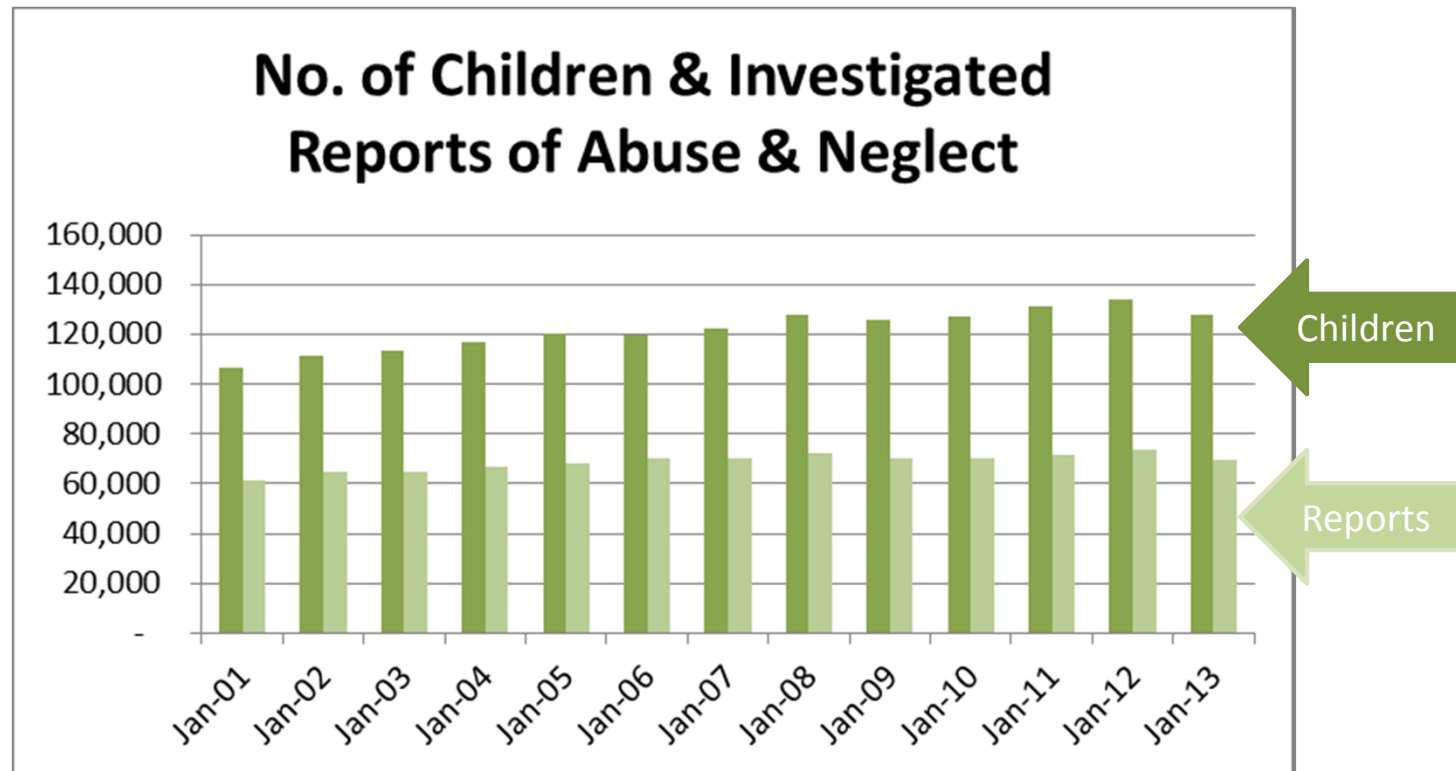


County Funding Grows More Important





CPS Workload Grows as Pop. Grows & Economy Worsens





The State's Oversight Role





NC-DHHS Active in Supervising County DSS CPS

Per policy manual--supervision of the local agencies is carried out through:

- Issuance and interpretation of policies
- Provision of consultation and technical assistance
- Conduct of biennial reviews of program performance
- Establishment of program improvement plans as needed to ensure that policies, standards, and methods are in operation to achieve safety for children

If a county agency is unable to correct agency practice so that adequate protective services are provided, the Division of Social Services has the authority to assume direct responsibility for providing services.



State Sets CPS Process & Requirements

- DSS is responsible for receiving reports of suspected child abuse, neglect, or dependency and evaluating these reports to determine if the reported information meets the statutory guidelines for child maltreatment
- Each DSS to have specific written procedures for receiving CPS reports and for providing supervisory decision making 24 hours a day
- Average monthly caseload size for child welfare intake to be no greater than one worker per 100 CPS referrals



State Sets Education Requirements

SOCIAL WORKER III

- Minimum Training and Experience Requirements:
 - Master's degree in social work from an accredited school of social work
 - Bachelor's degree in social work from an accredited school of social work and completion of the Child Welfare Collaborative (Child Welfare positions only)
 - Bachelor's degree in social work from an accredited school of social work and one year directly related experience
 - Master's degree in a human services field and one year of directly related experience
 - Bachelor's degree in a human services field from an accredited college or university and two years directly related experience
 - Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and three years of directly related experience



State Sets Training Requirements

§ 131D-10.6A. Training by the Division of Social Services required.

NC-DHHS Division of Social Services to establish minimum training requirements for child welfare services staff and are as follows:

- (1) Child welfare services workers shall complete a minimum of 72 hours of pre-service training before assuming direct client contact responsibilities
- (2) Child protective services workers shall complete a minimum of 18 hours of additional training that the Division of Social Services determines is necessary to adequately meet training needs
- (3) Child welfare services supervisors shall complete a minimum of 72 hours of pre-service training before assuming supervisory responsibilities and a minimum of 54 hours of additional training that the Division of Social Services determines is necessary to adequately meet training needs
- (4) Child welfare services staff shall complete 24 hours of continuing education annually



State Sets CPS Process & Requirements

- All accepted reports of child maltreatment must be reported to State's central registry (10A NCAC 70A.0112).
- Intake social worker must use NC-DHHS Structured Intake Form, DSS-1402, to document information about report of suspected abuse, neglect or dependency
- All reports received for CPS Assessment require:
 - Two party review of intake decision;
 - That one be in a management position, and all persons participating in intake decision must sign intake tool
 - Written notice to reporter, unless waived or anonymous, within 5 business days after receipt of report



State Sets Assessment Requirements

G.S. 7B-302 sets time standards for maltreatment assessments from receipt of reports:

- Reports of abuse initiated immediately, within 24 hours
- Reports of neglect or dependency within 72 hours following the receipt of the report
- NC-DHHS *Structured Intake* sets evaluation criteria





CPS Conflicts of Interest Arise, Must Engage Neighboring County

10A NCAC 70A .0103 REPORTS OF NEGLECT, ABUSE OR DEPENDENCY

- Reports of neglect, abuse, or dependency SHALL be referred to another county DSS for investigation when alleged perpetrator is DSS employee, foster parent supervised by DSS, DSS board member, or caretaker in sole-source contract group home or agency-operated day care facility
 - If DSS director, in his professional judgment, believes DSS agency would be perceived as having conflict of interest, the director MAY request another county conduct the investigations



State Has Authority to Assume Control of Child Welfare Services

108A-74. County department failure to provide services; State intervention in or control of service delivery.

NC-DHHS Secretary, upon determination that county DSS is not providing child protective services, foster care services, or adoption services in accordance with State law and with applicable rules adopted by the Social Services Commission

- May intervene in the particular service or services in question, or;
- If failure to provide services poses substantial threat shall withhold funding and shall ensure services provision through public or private agency contracts or by direct operation



County Governance & Oversight





Counties Must Have Board Oversight

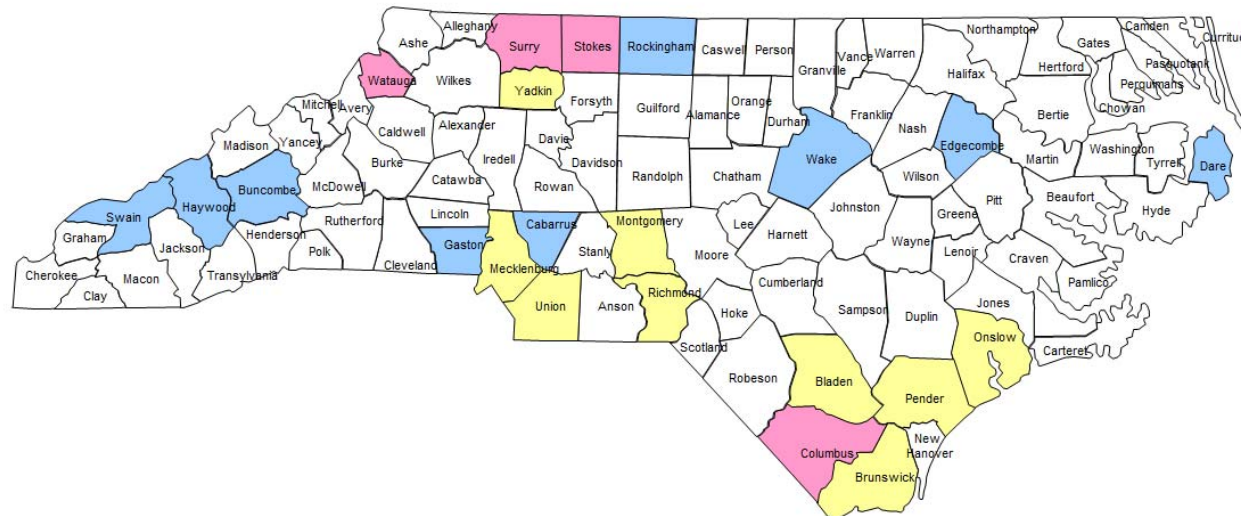
- § 108A-1. Every county shall have a board of social services or a consolidated human services board created pursuant to G.S. 153A-77(b)
- Board must establish county policies for programs established by 108A in conformity with rules and regulations of Social Services Commission and under NC-DHHS supervision





County Boards of County Commissioners Select Best Configuration

County Models for DSS Governance



- Option 1: BOCC assumes county board of social services powers and duties
- Option 2: BoC creates County Human Services Consolidated Board
- Option 3: BoC creates Human Services Consolidated Board and assumes powers and duties.
- Traditional structure



County DSS Governance Structure

County Board of Social Services; 3 to 5 members, at county BoC option

- 3 member = 1 county appointee & 1 Social Services Commission appointee appoint 1 add. member
- 5 member = 2 BoC & 2 Social Services Commission appoint 1 add. member
- Members must reside in county, must meet at least once per month

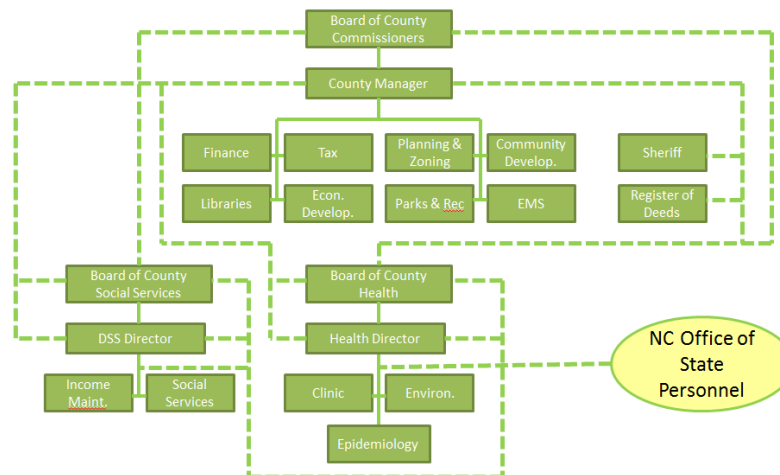
County Consolidated Human Services Board appointed by BoC

- 4 persons consumers of human services, 8 professionals (1 psychologist, 1 pharmacist, 1 engineer, 1 dentist, 1 optometrist, 1 veterinarian, 1 social worker, and 1 registered nurse), 2 physicians (1 as psychiatrist), 1 BoC member
- Members must reside in county, must meet at least quarterly

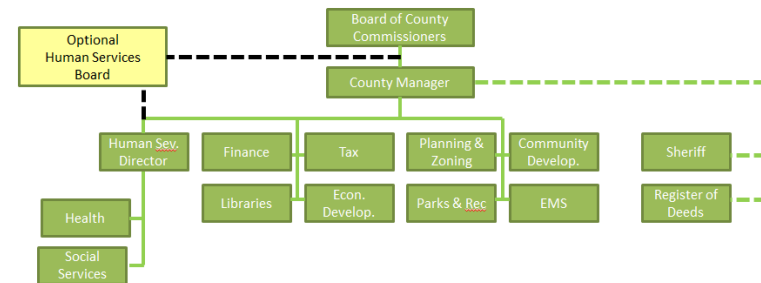
BoC acting as DSS Board or Consolidated Human Services Board



Traditional Structure of NC County Government



Consolidated Structure of NC County Government





Regardless of Form, All County Boards Must Comply with Statute

Duties include:

- Select county director of social services according to the merit system rules; consolidated director under manager
- Advise county and municipal authorities in developing policies and plans to improve social conditions of community
- Consult with the DSS Director about problems relating to his office, and to assist him in DSS planning budgets
- Transmit or present DSS budgets of the county department of social services for public assistance, social services, and administration to BoC
- Have such other duties and responsibilities as General Assembly, NC-DHHS or Social Services Commission or BoC may assign to it



Community Child Protection Teams

- CCPTs required to review active child welfare cases to determine gaps and deficiencies in services and resources in each county CPS system
 - CPTs established through Executive Order 142 in 1991 and further defined in N.C. G.S. 7B 1406
- Information used to develop prevention strategies as well as strategies to address a current condition
- Teams required annually to report information gathered from case reviews and other sources to county Board of Commissioners and NCDSS
- Teams also provide public awareness campaigns in child well-being



Community Child Protection Teams

CPTs have mandated team members & counties may appoint 5 additional members; team must have:

- DSS Director and member of director's staff
- Local law enforcement officer, appointed by BoC
- Attorney from district attorney's office, appointed by the district attorney;
- Executive director of local community action agency, as defined by NC-DHHS,
- Superintendent of each LEA
- Member of county board of social services
- Local mental health professional, appointed by area authority
- Local guardian ad litem coordinator
- County health director
- Local health care provider, appointed by the local board of health

Counties report that those commonly absent from meetings are: district attorney's office, DSS board member, executive director of local Community Action Agency, county health director





Federal CPS Metrics





Federal CPS Measures for North Carolina

For Period October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013

Federal Standards Criteria	National Standard	NC	Large Counties	Medium Counties	Small Counties
1. Recurrence of Maltreatment	6.1% or less	5.85%	6.71%	5.92%	5.27%
2. Maltreatment in Foster Care	0.57% or less	0.28%	0.46%	0.25%	0.23%
3. Reunified within 12 Months	76.2% or more	54.83%	58.93%	55.77%	50.92%
4. Reentry into Foster Care within 12 Months	8.6% or less	4.02%	3.61%	3.52%	4.83%
5. Adoption within 24 Months	32% or more	37.22%	44.81%	41.26%	29.23%
6. Placement Stability (2 or fewer placements)	86.7% or more	88.18%	87.77%	90.46%	85.63%



NC-DHHS Works to Ensure Foster Care Visitations Occur

	FFY 2009	FFY 2010	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
Aggregate number of children served in foster care (N=15,877)	13,520	12,674	12,460	12,091
Number of children visited each and every month in care	9,077	10,283	11,170	11,438
Total number of visit months for children visited each and every month in care	69,714	80,622	86,560	93,144
Total Number of Visit months where at least one visit occurred in child's residence	57,466	68,417	75,627	78,254
Percentage of children in foster care under the responsibility of the State who were visited on a monthly basis by the caseworker handling the case of the child	67.1%	81.1%	90%	94.6%
Percentage of visits that occurred in the residence off the child	82.4%	84.9%	87%	88.8%



Recommendations for Committee Study & Consideration





Community Child Protective Teams Identify Key Indicators of Child Maltreatment

- Family & caretaker substance abuse issues
- Domestic violence
- Access to consistent, quality mental health services





NC DSS Directors' Association Active in System Improvement

- Challenges in accessing mental health services
 - Evaluate efficiency of mental health service delivery
 - Explore options to reorganize DSS & Mental Health, merging services for children, co-locate staff, fund DSS pilots of MH clinical services
 - Require use of evidence based practices & ensure Medicaid funding at initial entry
- Challenges in communication & accountability
 - Expand continuous quality improvement (REAP)
 - Build upon & fund state oversight & expand professional development of child welfare supervision; rework conflict of interest process
 - Reconsider funding structures to focus on prevention & cost-effective services
- Challenges in foster care length of time
 - AOC to track children via abuse/neglect/dependency petitions
 - Consider alternative placements such as paid kinship



NCACC Hears County Concerns

- Technology
 - No statewide case management system or tools for CWS workers
- Funding
 - Few state dollars & federal funds drying up
- Accountability
 - County DSS charged with all public guardianship cases
 - How to manage CPS conflict of interest
 - Funding, reporting

