



Garrett County Department of Social Services

2011 Annual Report

From our Director



As the Director of the Garrett County Department of Social Services, it is indeed my pleasure to present for your review the Garrett County Department of Social Services 2011 Annual Report.

2011 has been a busy year for myself and my staff as we continue to work vigorously to ensure that we provide only the highest quality of services to those whose lives are touched by our services and programs.

Just as the Governor, Legislature, and our Leadership in Baltimore search for solutions to Maryland's budgetary crisis and the ensuing challenges we, too, in Garrett County struggle. Although our struggles are linked they are different. We continue to move forward while working through shortages in funding, a significant increase in our case loads, the loss of several staff, and challenges unique to rural Garrett County. However, I can say with certainty that GCDSS will utilize the collective wisdom, enthusiasm, and innovative nature of its staff to meet all challenges and initiate solutions.

The Agency's Advisory Board remains a positive and valued advocate providing insight into the unique needs of our community and customers. Members of the Agency's Advisory Board play a vital role, using their knowledge regarding Agency programs and services to provide a factual bridge of information between our Agency and the community.

As Director of GCDSS, I value the continued support of an outstanding and dedicated staff. During these trying economic times, I set great store in DHR's leadership, knowledge, and cooperation. I continue to value the many and varied contributions of Local Government and community partnerships. My staff and I look forward to continuing our collaboration on behalf of the customers we serve and the community in which we live.

Sincerely,

Rick DeWitt, Director

Leadership Team

Rick DeWitt
Director

Tamra Canfield
Assistant Director Services

Tom Rosser
Assistant Director Family Investment
Administration

Phil Gillum
Assistant Director Child Support

Alicia Streets
Assistant Director Administration

Advisory Board Members

Kim Durst, Chair

Barbara Baker, Vice-Chair

Heather Hanline, Secretary

Robert Gatto,
County Commissioner

William Aspinall

Beverly Beard

Donna McClintock-Fost

Linda Green

Lt. Jeff Murphy

Suzanne Ryan

Sharon Teets

Values

We value the effort, experience, knowledge, and professionalism of our employees to respond to the needs and deliver services to our customers. We value our employees' ability to inform our customers of the programs and services they are entitled and their obligation to actively participate in the process.

We value our partnerships with other community agencies that contribute to the delivery of service to our customers.

We value and respect our customers as individuals as we work together to improve the quality of their lives.

Mission

We will aggressively pursue opportunities to assist Garrett County residents in economic need, increase prevention efforts, and protect vulnerable children and adults.

Vision

We envision Garrett County residents living free from abuse and neglect while maximizing their potential for self-sufficiency.

Dedicated to: Prevention, Protection, and Self-sufficiency

Customers of the Garrett County Department of Social Services have the following rights:

- ◆ **To receive appropriate service (s).**
- ◆ **Services which are free from harm and mental, physical and sexual abuse/exploitation by staff.**
- ◆ **An impartial, timely grievance procedure, which affords you the ability to exercise your rights as described in the "Consumer Grievance Policy".**
- ◆ **To receive services in accordance with the applicable individualized Service Plans which conform to the rules and regulations which govern this Agency.**
- ◆ **To participate in the development and/or revision of their Service Plan.**
- ◆ **To receive in appropriate terms and language, explanation of the following:**
 - content and objectives of the Service Plan;**
 - nature and significance of any possible adverse effects caused by the Service Plan;**
 - name, title and role of personnel directly responsible for carrying out Service Plan;**
 - when appropriate, other available service providers.**
- ◆ **To privacy and confidentiality of services provided and records maintained.**
- ◆ **To access your Service Plan. If the Case Manager/Services worker responsible for your case determines access to your records would be harmful to you or other interested parties, that information will not be released. Release of information to other agencies can only be done with your written consent unless provided for by regulation.**
- ◆ **To an explanation, in appropriate terms and language usage, of any charges or fees that will be applied before receiving services from the Agency.**
- ◆ **Upon admission to services, to be informed in appropriate terms and language and through written policies by the prominent posting of the above rights.**

Social Services Administration

Child Protective Services

The Child Protective Services Unit continues to investigate cases and work on accreditation of our Child Advocacy Center (CAC) through the National Children's Alliance (NCA).

CAC meetings are held monthly with participation by all parties involved with our cases. Dr. Richard Porter, forensic nurse Heather Cooper, State's Attorney Lisa T. Welch, and law enforcement add valuable input to our case staffings. At these meetings, active cases and strategies for better outcomes are discussed.

In September 2011, Garrett County CAC and Pressley Ridge will co-host a 2 day workshop presented by Dr. Wayne Deuhn, a professor of Social Work at the University of Texas. Dr. Deuhn serves as a consultant to social service and mental health agencies throughout the country. The workshop will focus on assisting children who are victims of sexual abuse. As part of the workshop, participants will also receive information on ways to help families and foster parents assist children who have been abused.

Funding for this workshop was made possible by a grant from the Governor's Office specifically for Child Advocacy Centers. Funding from this grant will also be used to send 4 members of the Garrett County CAC team, including 2 staff from the Office of the State's Attorney, to Dallas, TX to attend further training. The GC CAC would like to thank Alicia Streets for writing the CAC grant that made these training events possible.

Locally, the CAC will purchase slides to be shown at Garrett Eight Cinema. These slides will run prior to the start of the featured movie and depict internet and child safety messages.

Garrett Co. CAC will continue to work towards full accreditation. Accreditation will enhance our ability to apply for additional grant funding and resources to augment our services to children and families.

In-Home Family Services

The Garrett County In-Home Family Service Program's purpose is to promote the safety and well-being of children and their families; to preserve family unity when children's safety can be supported; to maintain permanency for children; and to empower families to achieve or sustain independence and self-sufficiency. The program's goals include enhancing the parents' ability to create a safe, stable, and nurturing home environment that promotes healthy child development; preventing out-of-home placement of children when safety can be promoted to a sufficient proportion; and providing, referring, and coordinating services needed to achieve or maintain family safety, stability, independence, and unity.

The Garrett County Department of Social Services provides a continuum of service programs designed to achieve the purpose and goals of In-Home Family Services and to meet the needs of individual families.

Recently, Ms. Mandy DeWitt joined the GC IHFS staff. Ms. DeWitt was the Agency's VOCA therapist and provided counseling to physically and sexually abused children. Ms. DeWitt's skills will be an excellent and welcome addition to the IHFS unit and the children and families it serves. Welcome, Mandy.

The IHFS unit provides services to about 48 families per month and is accredited by the National Council on Accreditation, in New York.



Social Services Administration

Foster Care & Adoption

The Garrett County Foster Care/Adoption Program provides a temporary, out-of-home placement for children whose biological families are experiencing difficulties in parenting and/or supervision. Placement of children occurs within the context of licensed foster families, treatment foster homes, group homes, and residential treatment centers. The goal of the program is to provide high quality case management services and to secure a safe permanent living arrangement for each child as soon as possible. The Garrett County Foster Care/Adoption Program has seen the number of children in care drop from an average of 50 per month to 32-33 per month with about half of those children being teenagers in long-term foster care. The Garrett County Foster Care/Adoption Program is very pleased that 20 children were reunited with their families this past year.

Regular Foster Care - provides services to vulnerable children from birth to age 21. In FY 2011, the program provided services to 70 children. The length of stay for children in the program declined following new legislation and with due diligence from GCDSS staff to pursue permanent placement for cases of children in care for 15 months. Nearly all foster families are being “dually” licensed which means they will provide foster care as well as adopt. This has aided in the increasing number of finalized adoptions in the County.

Semi-Independent Living – provides services to youths in foster care who are 16 years or older and

who will be emancipated upon reaching adulthood. The purpose of this program is to assist youth with life skills, educational advancement, career planning, employment, and money management skills.

These skills will prepare these foster children for success as adults. The goal of this program is to teach skills that are vital for self-sufficiency.

Treatment Foster Care – provides services to severely, emotionally-disturbed foster children while maintaining placement in a foster family setting and is completing its 13th full year in FY 2011. All program staff maintained national certification in non-violent crisis intervention techniques.

Kinship Care – provides services to extended family members meeting the needs of children accepted for care through the foster care program. Placement of foster children with an extended family member has significantly increased and is preferred if removal from the biological family is imminent.

Adoption – licenses and matches adoptive homes with waiting children through the Maryland Adoption Resource Exchange Program (M.A.R.E.). GCDSS finalized 9 adoptions in 2011 exceeding the goal of 5 set by the State, celebrated 20 years and 100 finalized adoptions. In addition, GCDSS has partnered with other counties to find suitable families for waiting children.



Social Services Administration

Adult Protective Services

Garrett County DSS continues to provide quality services to the adult population through voluntary, as well as mandated, programs. Vulnerable adults who have been mistreated, exploited, or have placed themselves at risk receive services under the Adult Protective Services Program (APS). All APS reports are screened by the Assistant Director and the lead APS worker prior to assignment for investigation. If allegations of abuse, self-neglect, or exploitation or neglect by others are proven valid, services are provided to prevent further harm or institutionalization. Of the 69 investigations completed in Fiscal Year 2011, 52 were self-neglect, 11 were neglect by others, 4 were exploitation, and 2 were physical abuse.

Educational workshops on APS and Domestic Violence were provided to professionals and members of the community in the previous year. Garrett County DSS purchased several videos that could be used by local agencies and the community for educational purposes. Content of the tapes included how to recognize the stages of Alzheimer's Disease and how to effectively deal with this progressive disease.

Social Services to Adults (SSTA) – is a voluntary program for disabled and elderly adults who may be in need of financial, medical, social, or psychological assistance. Customers may also be in need of, and/or eligible for, In-Home Aid Services (IHAS). Chore services are provided to help prevent institutionalization. The goal is to enable customers to remain in their community in the least restrictive manner so that their needs are met.

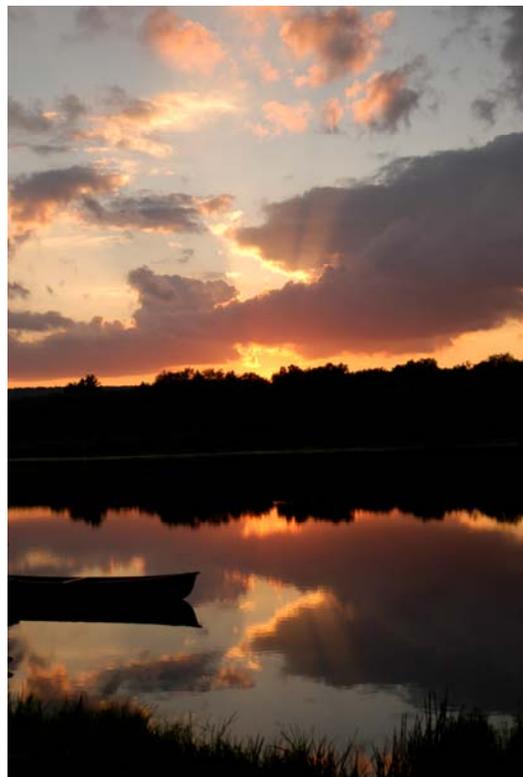
Customer safety is very important while services are being delivered. Customers may be referred to a step-up program, such as APS; or, they may be stepped-down from APS to SSTA/IHAS.

The APS and Social Services to Adults Programs have seen an increase in referrals due to community

knowledge, increased need, and our customers are living longer. Although there was an increase in referrals, our average caseload size decreased slightly during the winter, due to a State-imposed moratorium. The moratorium lasted until May of 2010. Approximately 203 customers were served monthly by the Garrett Co. DSS Adults Services Unit. The Department collaborates with the local Area Agency on Aging, the Health Department, and the local Core Service Agency to meet the needs of customers in the most efficient and effective manner.

Project Home – has one certified home serving four customers. The Agency's goal is to provide assistance to customers in the least restrictive setting with a homelike atmosphere. These individuals attend the local Adult Day Care Program and receive socialization skill enhancement.

All Adult, APS, Project Home, and Guardianship programs are accredited by the National Council on Accreditation in New York.



Family Investment Administration

The Family Investment Program (FIP) provides Medical Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) formerly Food Stamps, Child Care Subsidy, Temporary Cash Assistance to Families (TCA), Temporary Cash Assistance to Disabled Adults (TDAP), Long Term Care (Medical Assistance for Nursing Home residents), and Job Activity, Readiness, Placement, and Retention services. Family Investment is segmented into four interdependent units, two teams of Case Managers, Garrett WORKS (work opportunities), and Clerical Support.

Benefits issued by Family Investment are based both on technical and financial criteria as determined by Federal, State, and local policies. Garrett’s Family Investment Unit has exceeded the state and federal goals for error rates and application processing compliance in all Family Investment programs for seven years running. This reflects the hard work and dedication of FIP staff.

During the last state fiscal year, the SNAP caseload continued to increase, with a jump of 9% more cases this year over last. The SNAP caseload stands higher than our past record in 1994 (the end of the last recession). The Community Medical Assistance caseload increased by 3%. The Long Term Care (Nursing Home) Medical Assistance dropped slightly by 6.2%. The size of this caseload is driven by the number of nursing home beds in the County, as well as residents who qualify. TDAP has increased by 10.2% and provides cash assistance to disabled adults.

The TCA caseload increased by 12.45%. The continued increase in our core programs, SNAP, MA ,and TCA, are an indicators of the depth of the recession and its effect

on Garrett County citizens. We have seen a minor slowdown in applications over the last couple months, but the trend remains upward.

The Garrett WORKS Program remains a particularly challenging job in light of current circumstances. The strenuous work program requirements to qualify for TCA may discourage many applicants. Garrett WORKS helps customers find and retain employment. Jobs skills enhancement offers help for working customers to improve their skills and advance their careers. As of April 2011 Garrett WORKS exceeded our job placement goal of 35, making 38 placements. Additionally, Garrett County has reached a monthly Universal Engagement average of 100%, and a Work Participation Rate of 54%.

“Wheels to Work,” one of our most successful work enabling programs, allows working customers to purchase or fix their used vehicles with low-cost loans. During fiscal year 2011 to date, the program placed or repaired 7 vehicles. Wheels to Work is a partnership program between Garrett County Department of Social Services and Garrett County Community Action. Unfortunately, funding for this program remains reduced for SFY 2012. The program is currently operating with money from the loan receipt fund, which is insufficient to cover the long-term continuation of the program.

Family Investment met or exceeded all performance measures set by DHR, as well as those set in our own strategic plan, for FY 2011. Wage at placement is currently \$9.00 per hour. This wage is related directly to Garrett County’s economy.

<u>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</u>	<u>GOAL</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Application Processing Compliance		
Regular Applications	97%	100%
Expedited Food Stamps	100%	100%
Food Stamp Error Rate	Below 6%	0%
TCA Error Rate	Below 3%	0%
MA Error Rate	Below 3%	0%
TCA Job Placements	35	38 as of 4/1/11
Job Retention	70%	59%
Earnings Gain Rate	40%	219%
Work Participation Rate	50%	54%

Family Investment Administration

The largest caseload handled by Family Investment continues to be the Medical Assistance caseload. 22.1% of Garrett County's population participated in some kind of Medical Assistance program during 2011. This is the third largest percentage of the general population that relies on Medical Assistance of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland, behind only Worcester County and Baltimore City.

The Child Care Subsidy Program had a wait list for customers imposed effective February 1, 2011. Currently there are 31 children on the Child Care Subsidy Program wait list. As of July 2011 the POC caseload stood at 75 children.

Family Investment continues to provide services to needy customers through Emergency Assistance for utilities and housing and Burial Assistance. \$55,602 in grant monies were awarded this year. These funds ran out at the end of April 2011. Garrett County's allocation for SFY 2012 is \$48,413. The grant limit for Emergency Assistance has been reduced to \$400 max to stretch this funding.

FY 11 Statistics

Temporary Cash Assistance to families	Recipients	208
Temporary Cash Assistance to disabled adults	Recipients/Cases	65
Public Assistance to Adults	Recipients/Cases	9
Purchase of Care (POC)	Children	75
Food Stamps	Recipients	4358
Medical Assistance-Community	Recipients	4417
Medical Assistance-Long Term Care (Nursing Homes)	Recipients	239

Local General Administration

The Local General Administration (LGA) is responsible for numerous support functions including the Finance Office and Administration. The Finance Office is responsible for all financial operations including accounting and budgeting. Administration is responsible for personnel, procurement, inventory, fleet, network, and facilities management.

LGA Unit Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2011

Outcomes

Effectively used resources to meet agency needs without deficit spending.

Limited resources were used to meet core mission.

The fiscal year was closed with no deficits.

Collaborated with programs and community partners to institute and enhance strategic planning initiatives.

Decreased network downtime and increased productivity.

Streamlined fiscal processes to gain efficiencies in operations.

Successfully obtained the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Grant and the GOCCP Child Advocacy Center Grant.

Maximized personnel resources to better implement best practices and streamline customer service by implementing an automated time and leave keeping system



Child Support Enforcement

The Child Support Enforcement Unit of GCDSS plays an important role in carrying out the Agency's goal of assisting customers in becoming self-sufficient.

Since 1999 the Bureau of Support Enforcement (BOSE) has been speaking to 9th graders at the local high schools about their growing responsibilities, budgets, and reality of paying child support. This message has been presented to approximately 5,600 students since the beginning of the program. Student feedback indicates that this program has and continues to be enthusiastically received.

Child Support Services Include

- ◆ Locating non-custodial parents
- ◆ Collection and distribution of payments—The GCDSS Child Support Unit collected and distributed over \$2,000,000 in FY 2011.

- ◆ Obtaining a court order for child support and medical insurance
- ◆ Enforcement of court orders—The GCDSS Child Support Unit has met or exceeded the State Stat goal for establishing court orders and paternity
- ◆ Review and adjustment of court orders

Paternity Establish Services are available through genetic testing and an In-Hospital Paternity program.

There are a number of administrative tools for enforcing court orders that include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Drivers License Suspension
- ◆ New Hire Reporting
- ◆ Automatic Earnings Withholding
- ◆ Interception of Federal and State Tax Refunds

Grantsville Office



On July 1, 2011 the GCDSS Grantsville office celebrated it's first year of expanded service delivery to customers in northern Garrett County. Nancy Humberson, Jenny McNally, Elaine Meyers, and Melissa Malatesta continue to staff Grantsville full-time. Tanya Kessell, Lead Worker for Child Support Enforcement, is in Grantsville on

Tuesdays. Kristin Spiker and Linda Bolding Colaw offer customers work programs and addiction services. Linda Ashby and Darla Panther provide on-site supervision one day a week on alternating weeks. Monica Barnett and Mike Downton remain stationed at the Grantsville office full-time. The Agency has been fortunate and in May, Kathleen Kirkpatrick joined our Grantsville staff through the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Kathleen has been a great help with reception, affording the agency flexible coverage and she is great with our customers.

Family Investment services available at the Grantsville office include Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, walk-in interview service Monday through Thursday from 8:00 to 10:30 each morning. Customers are able to turn in an application for SNAP anytime the office is open (8:00 to 4:00 for Grantsville). All other FIP program interviews are by appointment (as we do in Oakland). Long-Term Care and Child Care Subsidy services remain in Oakland.

Customers with zip codes 21536 Grantsville, 21532 Frostburg, 21539 Lonaconing, 21522 Bittinger, and 21521 Barton are being served by the Grantsville office. Customers who live in 21520 Accident were transferred 12/1/10 and now also receive their services in the Grantsville office. Consideration is being given to transferring 21531 Friendsville customers as well; we are anticipating staff changes and will wait to see the outcome before deciding about this change.

During the past year the agency has received positive feedback from both customers and community partners in relation to our expanded services. Customers no longer must travel an 80 mile round trip to conduct business with the department. The office is a welcoming place with an upbeat atmosphere that is appreciated by customers and staff alike. It is important to note that the staff of the Grantsville office receive credit for making the office a success and one to be proud of. Collectively, they do a great job. We will work hard in light of the impact of budget cuts and staff reductions statewide to continue to provide this service to our Grantsville area customers.

The leadership and staff of GCDSS are committed to providing only the highest quality services to our customers and community.



GCDSS Staff hosted fun activities at the 2011 Garrett County Kids First Fun Fair.



GARRETT COUNTY HEALTH FAIR

The Garrett County Health Fair was held on Saturday, April 16, 2011, at the Wisp Resort in McHenry, Maryland. The Fair was well attended and information brochures were distributed regarding services provided by our agency. The theme for our agency was “Childhood Should Be A Breeze” and pinwheels were handed out to represent the theme. The children enjoyed the child-size table and coloring sheets that we made available to them. Special thanks to those who worked our booth: Dawna Day, April Adams, Mandy DeWitt, and State’s Attorney, Lisa Thayer Welch.



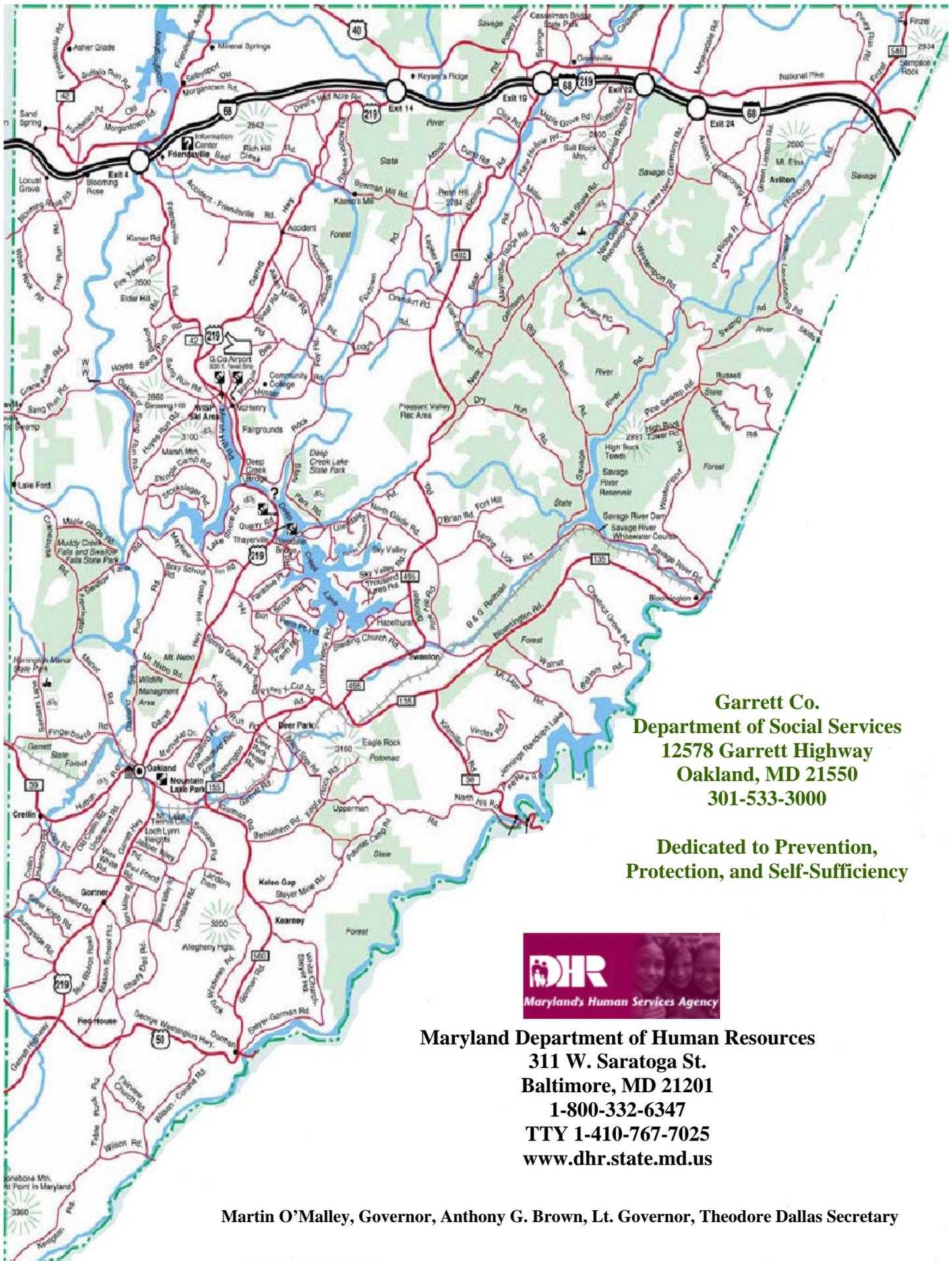
Krista Livengood

On July 14, 2011, Krista Livengood, was named GCDSS’s 2011 Child Support Worker of the Year. Krista contributes to the success of the Child Support office by providing outstanding customer service to our customers. Krista is a current member of the PQI/CQI Council and contributes positive and insightful suggestions on issues before the council.



Pictured left to right: Social Work Supervisor Larry Bruch, center Sabrina Shaffer, LCSW-C, and GCDSS Director Rick DeWitt

On March 31, 2011, Sabrina Shaffer, LCSW-C, was named Social Worker of the year by the Garrett/ Allegany County Social Work Caucus. Sabrina serves as an In-Home Services worker with Garrett County Department of Social Services, and has been in this position for four years.



Garrett Co.
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Dedicated to Prevention,
Protection, and Self-Sufficiency



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