



Department of Community Support Services

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Helping People To Improve The Quality Of Their Lives

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Department of Community Support Services (DCSS)

Mission Statement

To provide comprehensive health and human services and establish partnerships to positively impact the well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Vision Statement

Community Support Services will be recognized as a community partner and leader in program innovation by providing unparalleled access to premier health and human services, which support the sustainable well-being of all citizens.

Department Overview

The Department of Community Support Services (DCSS) is the County's Department, which provides health and human services to Alachua County residents. We are funded through general fund dollars, grants and donations. It is comprised of the following divisions and/or programs: Community Health Offering Innovative Care and Educational Services (CHOICES), Community Agency Partnership Program (CAPP), Community Stabilization Program (CSP), Crisis Center, Foster Grandparent Program, Social Services, Veteran Services and the Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center. The DCSS also is charged with oversight of numerous state unfunded mandates and outside community partnership programs: Medicaid, Child Protective Team, Indigent burial, Health Care Responsibility Act and the Alachua County Medical Examiner's Office and we also have oversight of outside agency collaborative funding to the Alachua County Health Department and Meridian Behavioral Health.

Community Agency Partnership Program (CAPP)

Phone-264-6707

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Lee Roberts, Program Manager

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Community Agency Partnership Program (CAPP)

Mission Statement

To reduce the impact of poverty in Alachua County by funding non-profit agencies that provide services in the areas of social service and health care.

General Description

CAPP is a yearly competitive funding process in which 501(c)(3) organizations with a physical address in Alachua County are eligible to apply.

Funding Priorities for FY2015/16

The Board of County Commissioners designated the following five categories as funding priorities: 1) Food 2) Health Care 3) Housing & Utilities 4) Children's Education and 5) Child Safety for Abused/Neglected Children. \$1,158,222.00 was awarded to 25 non-profits to conduct 32 programs to alleviate effects of poverty on our citizens and community.

Below are several of the programs and their providers:

- Medical and Dental Care Clinics; Provider: ACORN Clinic
- Weekend Hunger Food Backpacks for Child Students; Provider: Catholic Charities
- Safety for Abused/Neglected Children; Provider: Child Advocacy Center
- School Readiness for Working Poor Parents; Early Learning Coalition
- Meals-on-Wheels; Provider: Elder Care
- Developmentally Disabled Therapeutic Day Program; Provider: ARC
- Fighting Poverty through Child Education; Provider: Junior Achievement
- Shelter & Sustainable Independence for Homeless Families; Provider: Family Promise
- Gainesville Harvest for Rescued/Reclaimed Food; Provider: Bread of the Mighty Food Bank
- In-home Parenting Support & Training; Provider: Children's Home Society
- Alzheimer's Therapeutic Day Program; Provider: Eldercare

Community Stabilization

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Marie Small, Program Manager

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Community Stabilization Program

Mission Statement

To reduce the cycle of dependency and provide services and resources vital for economically disadvantaged persons and communities to become self-sufficient.

General Description

The Alachua County Community Stabilization Division is divided into two programs: the Community Self Sufficiency Program (CSSP) and the Community Sustainability Program (CSP).

The CSSP is designed to break the cycle of poverty and improve the quality of life of those citizens coming to the County in need of supportive services. We will strategically plan a holistic case management approach by, assessing educational, employment and economic needs. Barriers that prevent the successful transition into educational programs and employment opportunities will be determined and Individualized Improvement Plans (IIP) will be developed for each participant in the program. The CSSP will provide support to the clients receiving services from divisions within Alachua County Department of Community Support Services and other County Departments. This is accomplished by providing linkages to resources within the community. This Program will build community partnerships with businesses, faith based organizations, educational institutions and other social service providers. The objective of this program is to reduce the recidivism of citizens mired in poverty due to instability. The reduction of client recidivism will have an impact on the County's general fund and will help to create a new and increased taxpayer base.

The Community Self-Sufficiency Program will encompass three options, employment assistance, education geared towards employment and entrepreneurship. Some of the services provided are:

1. Job readiness training
2. Assistance with job referral and employment services
3. GED Assistance
4. Assistance with applying for Food Stamps and Disability
5. Assistance with housing referrals
6. Provision with limited medical assistance
7. Provision of tuition referral assistance

The Community Sustainability Program is responsible for identifying at risk communities and assisting them in becoming independent and sustainable. Programs and services will be developed based on the needs that exist in the targeted communities. The following are activities and programs that exist in this program:

1. Respite Care Contract
2. Identify and address needs of targeted at risk communities
3. Provide support to Homeless and Hungry Initiatives
4. Santa Fe College Adult Education Career Pathway Steering Committee
5. Empowerment Center Citizens Work Group – Staff Liaison
6. Empowerment Center Oversight Advisory board – Back Up Liaison

Crisis Center

Phone-264-6785

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Alexandra Martinez, Director

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The Crisis Center

Mission Statement

To participate in the solution of any human problem whenever and wherever it occurs in Alachua County through emotional support, education, counseling and crisis intervention.

General Description

In December 1969, Suicide and Crisis Intervention Services Organization was funded in Gainesville, Florida for a five-year period based on a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. When the federal grant ended in 1974, the organization continued to offer its services as an agency of Alachua County government and was renamed the Alachua County Crisis Center (CC). For over 40 years, the center has been responding to any citizen in distress in Alachua County.

The CC offers a full spectrum crisis and suicide intervention program. Through the effective use of highly trained volunteers and graduate students, the CC provides 24-hour/day telephone, face to face and outreach services to any Alachua County resident in emotional distress. Primary services include:

1. Telephone crisis and support counseling;
2. Emergency outreach interventions;
3. Face to face crisis counseling and short term psychotherapy;
4. Information and referral;
5. Community trauma response interventions;
6. Rumor Control;
7. Community education programs;
8. Professional consultations and trainings; and
9. Support services for survivors of suicide.

The CC offers most of its direct services through the use of highly trained volunteers and graduate students in mental health fields. During 2013, five professional staff coordinated and supervised the efforts of some 120 unpaid workers to offer the bulk of CC's services. The CC required over 50,000 hours to fully staff the programs, or 25 full-time equivalent staff.

During the last year, the CC responded to over 45,000 calls from our citizens, often in times of distress and great despair. The Center's face-to-face counselors offered over 4000 hours of counseling service to individuals, couples and families in our community this year.

Office of Social Services

Phone-264-6750

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Foster Grandparent Program (FGP)

264-6731

Gene Tysowsky, Director

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Social Services

Mission Statement

To serve as a safety net and to enhance the health and productivity of low-income Alachua County residents by providing information and referrals, access to health services, and short-term financial assistance.

Social Services is committed to helping all Alachua County citizens reach or return to a state of self-sufficiency by providing temporary assistance through a variety of sustainability programs.

General Description

Alachua Division of Social Services (ACDSS) offers medical and general assistance programs to low-income Alachua County residents who are not eligible for other government assistance programs. ACDSS is committed to assisting individuals, either through the direct provision of services or by referral to other agencies. The target population is Alachua County residents who are at or below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

AlachuaCares Health Services

1. Preventative health services (includes labs and diagnostics)
2. Prescription assistance
3. Medical supplies
4. Vision exams and/or glasses

Sustainability Programs

1. Eviction and foreclosure prevention (Emergency rent and mortgage assistance)
2. Emergency utility assistance
3. Public transportation
4. Urgent special needs
5. Security deposit assistance
6. Eviction prevention assistance

Fee Waiver /Eligibility Determination Programs

1. Animal services
2. Solid waste assessment
3. Health Care Responsibility Act (HCRA)

Indigent Burials and Cremations

Foster Grandparent Program

The Foster Grandparent Program provides valuable assistance to children and youth with special and exceptional needs. The volunteers, who are at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty level and age 55 and older, serve an average of 20 hours a week and receive hourly stipends. The volunteers serve as role models and mentors, and actively engage the children in various settings including day care centers, public and charter schools, and after school programs.

This is a federal grant funded by the Corporation for National and Community Services and sponsored by the Board of County Commissioners.

Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center

Phone-264-6760

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Laura Kalt, Director

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Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center

Mission Statement

To diminish the impact of sexual violence and facilitate recovery to victims and survivors of violent crime by providing 24/7 hotline counseling and emergency outreach response.

General Description

The Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center is a community-based victim service provider and certified rape crisis center with outreach offices in the Bradford and Union Counties. The program provides comprehensive services to adults and teen victims of sexual assault, survivors of homicide victims and domestic violence, including victims of aggravated assault and battery, burglary, robbery and adults molested as children. All services are free and confidential.

The provision of services, such as 24/7 hotline counseling, emergency outreach response, criminal justice support/accompaniment, face-to-face counseling and therapy is not limited to jurisdiction, municipality, or law enforcement agency. Advocate counselors are on-call 24/7 to respond to requests from any local law enforcement agency or hospital to assist and support victims of violent crime by responding to the hospital, crime scene or victim's home. The program serves anyone who is the victim of a crime, reported or unreported. The main service area consists of more than 100,000 citizens who reside in the incorporated municipality of the City of Gainesville. Additionally, the agency is certified as a rape crisis center by the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence per Florida Statute 794.055 (d).

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Office of Veteran Services

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Kim Smith, Director

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Veterans Services

Mission Statement: Alachua County Veteran Services Division of the Department of Community Support Services professionally applies specialized knowledge and training to meet the needs of eligible Alachua County veterans, dependents or surviving family members who contacts the office for assistance, advocates for the best interest of our veterans and works collaboratively with area agencies and organizations for the best interest of the veterans in Alachua County.

Goal: The goal of the office is to provide professional assistance to the veterans of Alachua County, their eligible dependents and survivors in securing all entitled/eligible veterans benefits, federal, state and local, earned through honorable military service.

Services: Veterans Counselors receive training through the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs and are required to annually pass a written examination in order to maintain accreditation. Counselors work as advocates for our clients and advise them about filing procedures, assist them with ordering records from various locations, work to gather data and resources as well as supporting documents to support their claims, strategize with them about the best approach to filing his or her claim, refer them to other community resources as needed and provide passionate and meaningful services to the veterans of Alachua County

Counselors are prepared to assist in filing for any benefits administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs or Alachua County. All counseling sessions are strictly confidential to protect personal information. These benefits include but are not limited to the following:

- **Adaptive equipment:** grants for home improvements for severely disabled
- **Aid and Attendance:** assistance for those confined to home/hospital/nursing home
- **Appeals:** guidance in appealing any decision made by the VA
- **Automobile Grants:** grants for automotive equipment for severely disabled
- **Burial Benefits:** assistance with burial/plot expenses
- **Clothing Allowance:** annual clothing assistance for qualified service connected disabled veterans
- **Death/Widows(ers) Pension:** financial assistance for surviving spouses of wartime veterans
- **Dependents Benefits:** extra benefits for children of disabled veterans
- **Disability Compensation:** financial assistance for those injured in line of duty
- **Education Benefits:** guidance in applying for higher education benefits
- **Home Loans:** assistance in receiving certificate of eligibility
- **Hospital/Medical Care:** assistance in enrolling with VA Medical Care
- **Pension Benefits:** financial assistance for wartime era veterans
- **Vocational Rehabilitation:** training for employment/education
- This office receives a copy of every Alachua County veteran's DD 214 (military discharge paper) who uses this county as their home of record upon entering the military. These DD 214's are kept on file and are available for copying if needed.