

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

AT A GLANCE

2007



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Philadelphia Department of Human Services

The mission of the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS) is to:

- *Protect children from abuse, neglect and delinquency; ensure their safety and permanency in nurturing home environments; and strengthen and preserve families by enhancing community-based prevention services.*
- *Provide services, in partnership with community organizations, to strengthen the overall well being of Philadelphia children, youth and families using a customer focused approach that is responsive to evolving community needs.*
- *Develop and implement policies and programs to continuously improve, measure and achieve positive outcomes for children; manage public resources efficiently; communicate with customers and the general public; and integrate systems in order to effectively deliver services to children and families.*

Department of Human Services



We Make A Difference
In The Lives Of Philadelphia's
Children And Families

DHS Structure

The Philadelphia Department of Human Services is a state administered, county run, child welfare agency. Essentially this means that the County (Philadelphia) operates the agency, and the State (Pennsylvania) regulates, licenses, and oversees operations. DHS consists of the five divisions of Children and Youth (CYD), Community Based Prevention Services (CBPS), Juvenile Justice Services (JJS), Contract Administration and Program Evaluation (CAPE), and Administration & Management (A&M).

Children and Youth investigates all reports of suspected child abuse and neglect, and provides child and family-centered services to more than 20,000 at risk children and their families each year.

Community Based Prevention Services provides social supports, through a variety of programs, to strengthen at-risk families before their situations lead to more intensive involvement in the DHS system.

Juvenile Justice Services is responsible for operating the county detention center (Youth Study Center) and facilitates services for delinquent children.

Contract Administration and Program Evaluation (CAPE) manages all contracts and conducts performance evaluations for the vendor agencies with which the Department contracts.

Administration & Management supports the overall management of the divisions of Children and Youth, Juvenile Justice Services, and Community Based Prevention Services, serves as a liaison with other City departments, and works to bring new technologies to DHS. The span of oversight for this division includes budget preparation and monitoring, information technology, personnel, procurement, facilities operations, management of pool cars, and other logistical matters.



How Do Children And Families Come Into Our System?

There are a variety of ways and reasons that children and families become involved with the Department of Human Services.

Children who are alleged to be abused or neglected come into the formal child protection/child welfare portion of DHS while an investigation ensues. An investigation is performed to assess the level of potential risk to the child, and when that level rises to moderate or high, children and families become accepted for formal child welfare services. This can stem from a report to the child abuse hotline **215-683-6100**, from a parent voluntarily reaching out to Department for help, or from a direct request from Family Court.

DHS is required by law to investigate all reports of child abuse and neglect, provide services that will keep a family together whenever possible, and to remove a child from his or her home when it is absolutely necessary to protect the child's welfare, safety or health. Even if a child is removed from the home DHS must make efforts to return that child as soon as possible except in certain instances. A child may also be placed outside of a home in emergency situations like sickness, injury, or death of a child's parents or caregivers.

In fulfilling this mandate, concerns of a child's welfare, safety and health are most often derived from allegations around reported or observed neglect – when a child's basic needs are not being met, or abuse – physical, sexual or emotional.

In addition to protecting children, DHS also fulfills a vital role in preventing abuse and neglect through a host of programs and services created to provide parents with the support, skills and guidance necessary to effectively raise their children. Today's population is filled with teen mothers, single parents and more and more children being raised by grandparents, aunts and uncles or family friends. Families challenged by poverty, drug abuse or inadequate family supports can be overwhelmed by the additional challenge of raising and providing for a child or children. Through Community Based Prevention Services, DHS works to strengthen these families to prevent stressors from culminating in abuse or neglect.

Families become involved with DHS' Community Based Prevention Services through referrals from the Department, other systems (Health Department, Hospitals etc.), voluntarily by calling **215 PARENTS** or as part of their Family Service Plan created by DHS after child protection/child welfare involvement.

Youth come to the attention of the Juvenile Justice division by way of Family Court when they are alleged to have committed a crime. If they are found guilty of the crime and the court feels they need treatment, rehabilitation, or supervision they can be either put on probation and sent home or placed in an out of home setting.

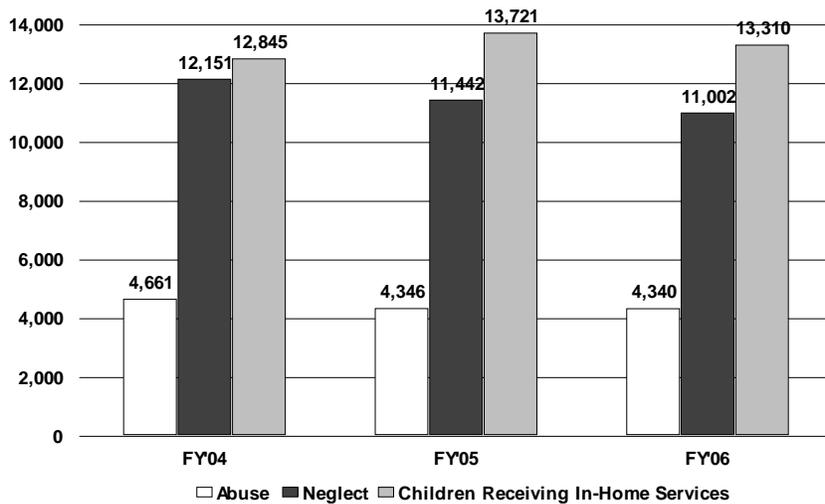
A web of federal and state laws and regulations govern provision and funding of child welfare services in Pennsylvania. Among the most significant are the Adoption and Safe Families Act, the Pennsylvania Juvenile Act, and the Pennsylvania Adoption Act.

Safety

The primary role of DHS is to protect children who are alleged to have been abused or neglected and to ensure their safety from immediate threats and impending dangers. A child's safety is comprised of conditions that either positively or negatively describe their physical and emotional well-being.

When DHS investigates a report of suspected abuse or neglect, the primary task a social worker has is to make a determination regarding the child's immediate safety and to evaluate the potential for further or future harm to a child. A set of defined risk factors including the age of the child, the nature and extent of injuries and whether an implement was used, the family's physical environment and past history with child protection services, drug or alcohol abuse, employment and other family stressors help guide a social worker's assessment in each case. If upon an investigation, DHS deems that a child is in immediate harm, there are only two basic courses of action: either the threat is removed or the child must be removed.

INVESTIGATION AND IN-HOME SERVICES

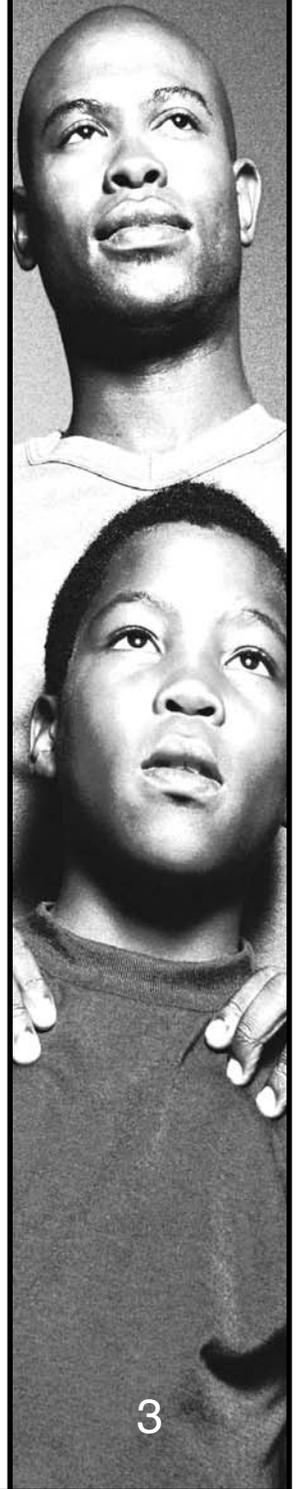


When evaluating a child's home environment, DHS social workers encounter numerous situations and must make difficult decisions that affect children and parents. Each of these decisions is made in the best interest of the child.

The following example is meant to illustrate a possible scenario that a DHS social worker may encounter on any given day.

A report is made to DHS by a therapist advising us that Jane D. is not taking her psychiatric medicine regularly and that she has a young infant at home and lives alone with no family supports. The therapist is concerned that Jane's tendency to not take her medicine will result in behavior that could be detrimental to the infant.

When the DHS social worker visits the home, Jane may be actively psychotic. She may talk of seeing snakes in the home and near the baby. In this instance, there is clearly an immediate risk to this child and DHS would remove the infant from the home immediately by seeking Court authorization to do so. With no known family resources to step in, removal of the child is the only possible option. Mother's active psychosis would prohibit obtaining Jane's agreement to voluntarily place her child. While the protection of the child is the primary focus, engaging emergency mental health services for mother must also be pursued.



In another instance, Jane may be acting appropriately and reasonably explaining to the social worker that she does occasionally forget to take her medication. In this instance, the social worker, after fully evaluating the rest of the home environment (is the home clean, is there adequate food, clothing etc.), may gauge that the child can be safe if Jane continues to take her medication – but how can we ensure that this happens? The social worker can draft a Safety Plan that stipulates the regular taking of medication as a condition for the infant to stay with Jane. The social worker will then engage the therapist to help monitor this agreement until in-home services can be put in place to ensure the child's continual safety.

A third scenario may have Jane discussing her medication issues with the social worker and together they decide that it is in the best interest of the child to temporarily place the infant in a foster home while Jane works through her challenges. This voluntary placement process would allow Jane to access the services she needs without jeopardizing the safety of the child while she goes through this difficult time. DHS would help Jane in this process by identifying and connecting her with the necessary services. Upon completion, Jane and her child would be reunified if the child's safety can be assured.

Every day, social workers are confronted with situations involving children and families being affected by mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment and underemployment, poverty, and homelessness, all of which may be contributing factors to child abuse. Child abuse occurs across all ethnic and racial lines and at all economic levels. DHS social workers must make decisions to protect Philadelphia's children, and while none of these decisions are made easily, they are all made based on the best interests of the child.

Permanency

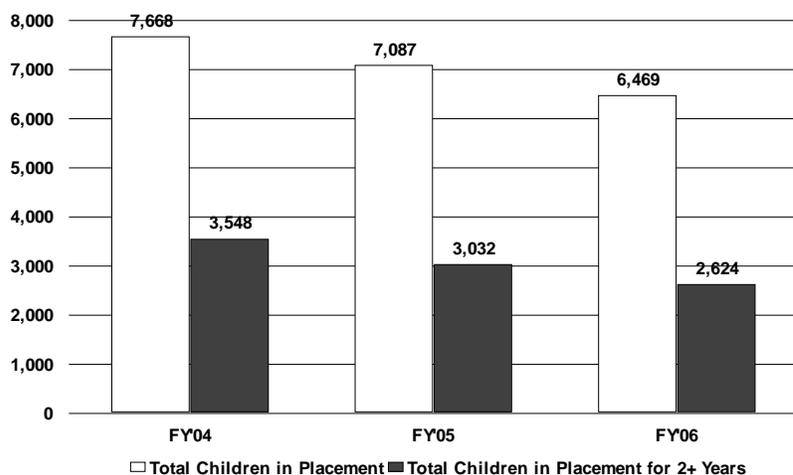
Permanency in the lives of children has an immeasurable influence on their future. But, what exactly is permanency? To understand the value and the need for permanence, it may be helpful to understand that adults and children perceive the passage of time in distinctly different ways. Ask a child to sit quietly for 15 minutes while you get ready to take her on a shopping trip and watch how it becomes an almost impossible request as her excitement builds in anticipation of the trip. Fifteen minutes for an adult is nothing. A trip to the beach is agonizing and interminable for a child. These days spent away from home, perhaps in foster care, feel more like centuries for a child whose growth, development and maturation are speeding ahead toward adulthood.

Permanency is achieved in a child's life when they have the security and stability that only a loving and lasting home can bring. Foster care is meant to be only a temporary measure and is filled with what one author has called "maybe days" where there are no sure answers to how often that child will have family visits, or how soon she will go home, or whether she can stay with this new family forever. Essentially DHS' mandate and practice is to make those "maybe days" as few as possible and to work aggressively to find permanent settings for the children entrusted to our care.

There are three ways for children in the child welfare system to achieve permanency – Reunification, Adoption and Permanent Legal Custodianship (PLC). The first, and most desirable is Reunification. Reunification occurs when DHS can ascertain that by allowing a child to stay in the home with their biological or legal guardians, they will be adequately cared for and will be safe. When at all possible and by legal mandate, DHS must make reasonable efforts to reunify children with their family.



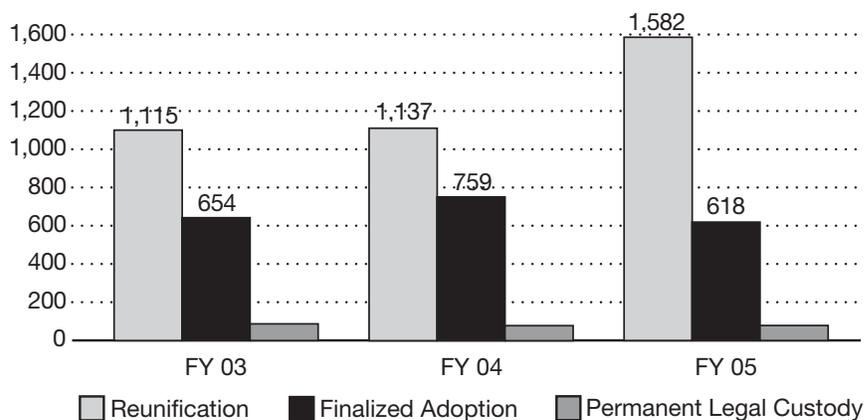
PLACEMENT



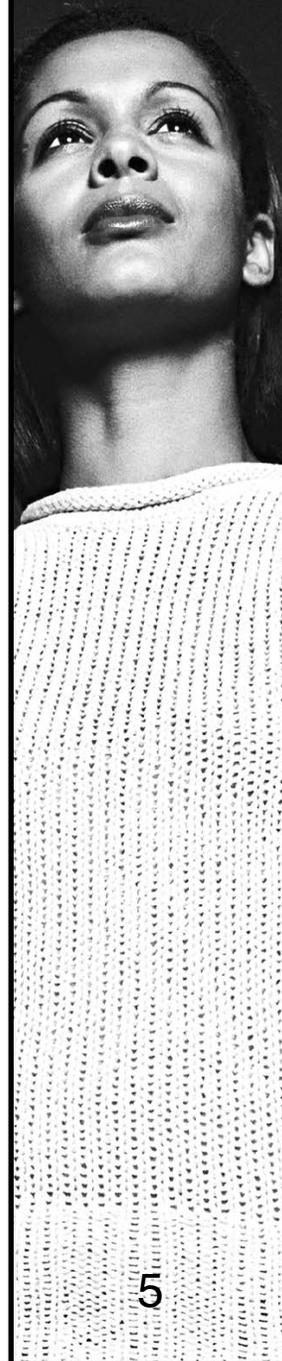
When DHS and the court determine that reunification is not a viable option, we must look to find an alternative permanent placement. Adoption occurs when a parent's parental rights have been terminated, either voluntarily or through court action. In these cases, DHS social workers work along with contracted service provider social workers to locate appropriate adoptive resources commensurate with the individual needs of the child or children. DHS looks to family members whenever possible, but often must expand this search to locate potential adoptive homes. After reunification, adoption is the next most permanent option we can offer a child because adoption legally creates the same relationship as between any child and her or his parent.

For some children in foster care, reunification and adoption may not be options. In this case, a third permanency option called Permanent Legal Custodianship (PLC) may be pursued. Reunification and Adoption may be ruled out for a variety of reasons including a need for the child to maintain emotional ties to and contact with their birth parents or a parent's inability to adequately care for a child as a result of physical or mental disabilities. Additionally, relative caregivers may not want to disrupt existing family relationships, and some youth do not want to be adopted by their caregivers and finally in some cases, there may not enough evidence to sup-

PERMANENCY



port a termination of parental rights, yet the child cannot safely live with the birth parent and currently lives with a caregiver who can provide the emotional security needed for the child's long term well-being. In these cases, PLC is a way for some children in foster care to find permanence in their living situation without severing ties to their parents.



Well-Being

In addition to protecting children in Philadelphia, ensuring their overall well-being is another important function of the Department of Human Services. A variety of influences converge together in a child's life to comprise well-being, and DHS works to ensure that these factors, including the environments in a child's family, school, and community, are appropriate and conducive to provide children in Philadelphia with an opportunity to be well cared for, safe, happy and to lead developmentally appropriate lives.

Well-being begins before a child is even born with access to prenatal care, and continues through early adulthood when ability to function independently and responsibly as an adult as well as access to higher education or technical schooling and ability to support oneself becomes a factor.

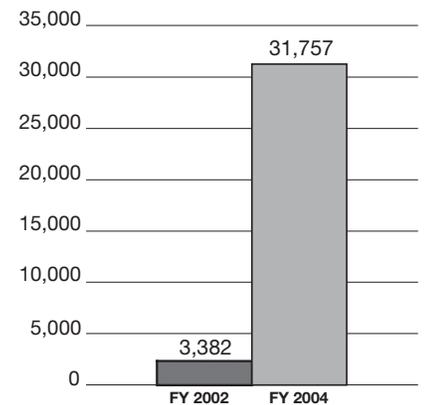
In order for children to have a chance to develop at appropriate levels both physically and mentally, certain factors must be in place. Well-being is a "raising of the bar" to ensure that children are not just safe and protected, but that they have their educational needs met in appropriate school settings, that they have the opportunity to learn and grow socially through involvement in community, religious, and ethnic organizations, that their time is occupied productively through after school programming, summer programming, and age appropriate leisure and cultural activities.

DHS' Division of Community Based Prevention Services provides Philadelphia's parents and children with a myriad of programmatic opportunities to increase their well-being. Examples of community Based Services include Services for Compromised Caregivers, Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention Programs, Family Support Services, Parenting Skills Enhancement, School Based Social Services, and Truancy Prevention Programs.

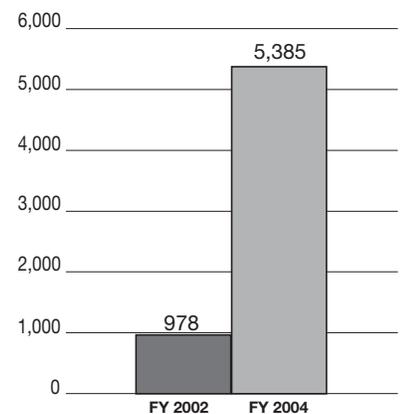
DHS' Parenting Collaborative consists of more than 70 community-based parenting programs conducted by agencies throughout the city. Programs also support parents and caregivers whose situations put them at high risk of involvement in the child protection system, including teen parents, parents of delinquent youth and parents affected by substance abuse, mental illness, mental retardation, homelessness and incarceration. Special programs targeting fathers are also available.

Through the Parent Action Network DHS offers a variety of general and specialty parent support groups throughout the city. All groups are led by trained facilitators and frequently feature guest speakers on topics of interest. Participation in all of the groups is free of charge and on-site childcare and travel reimbursement to and from meetings are available.

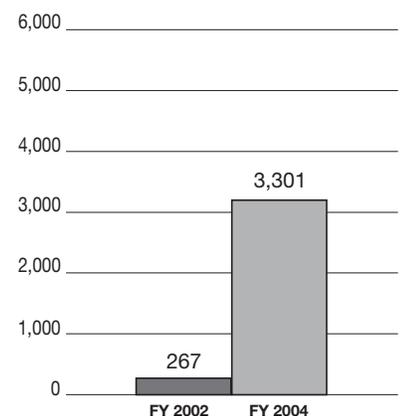
Children enrolled in after-school and positive youth development programs



Parents/caregivers participating in parenting education/support groups



Families diverted by DHS from SCOH or placement to community-based case management services



* The primary goal of the Parenting Collaborative is to help reunite children in foster care with their biological families by reinforcing supportive behaviors of the parents and seeking to change non-productive or harmful behaviors.



In an effort to equip the population of youth transitioning from foster care placements into independent living with the life skills needed to succeed in today's world, DHS developed the Achieving Independence Center, a "one-stop" gateway to services that meet the individual needs of youth in the program with non-traditional hours, flexible scheduling, and individualized plans for each youth.

As part of the work to increase the number of children returning to the home of their biological parents within the time periods mandated by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), DHS partnered with the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation (PWDC) to create the Achieving Reunification Center (ARC).

The ARC seeks to bring systems together in a collaborative effort to identify common approaches to help parents achieve positive outcomes, key among them, improving the timeliness of permanency. Parent members of the ARC are provided with a multitude of services that help them overcome barriers to housing, employment and education among others key areas. On site services partners: Community Women's Education Project, Tenant Action Group/Tenants Rental Assistance Corporation, Community Council for MH/MR, Philadelphia Comprehensive Centers for Fathers, Pathways PA, CommunityWorks, Community Legal Services, Focus on Fathers and the Health Federation of Philadelphia.

To improve accessibility to Philadelphia's array of social service programs and resources the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Mayor's Office of Information Services (MOIS) created Philly Search Online for Services (SOS). Accessible on the world wide web at www.phillysos.org, Philly SOS is a continually updated social services search engine designed to provide both residents and child welfare professionals with online access to Philadelphia's diverse world of resources. Philly SOS is searchable by agency name, service category, target group, keywords and by ZIP code.



**YOUR LIFELINE
FOR SOCIAL SERVICES**
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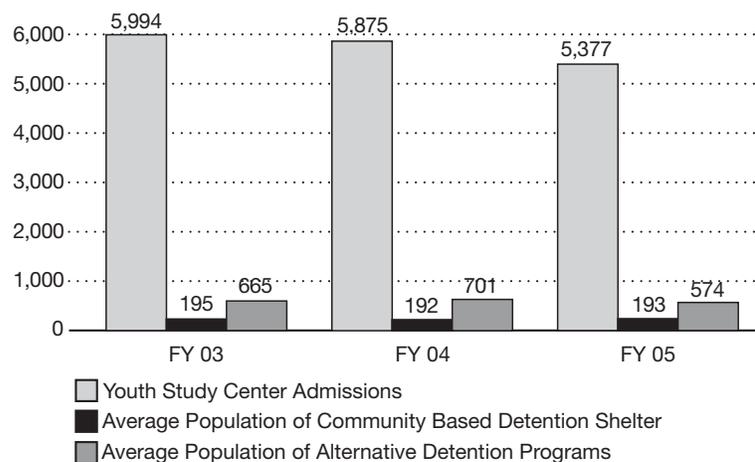


Services to Delinquent Youth

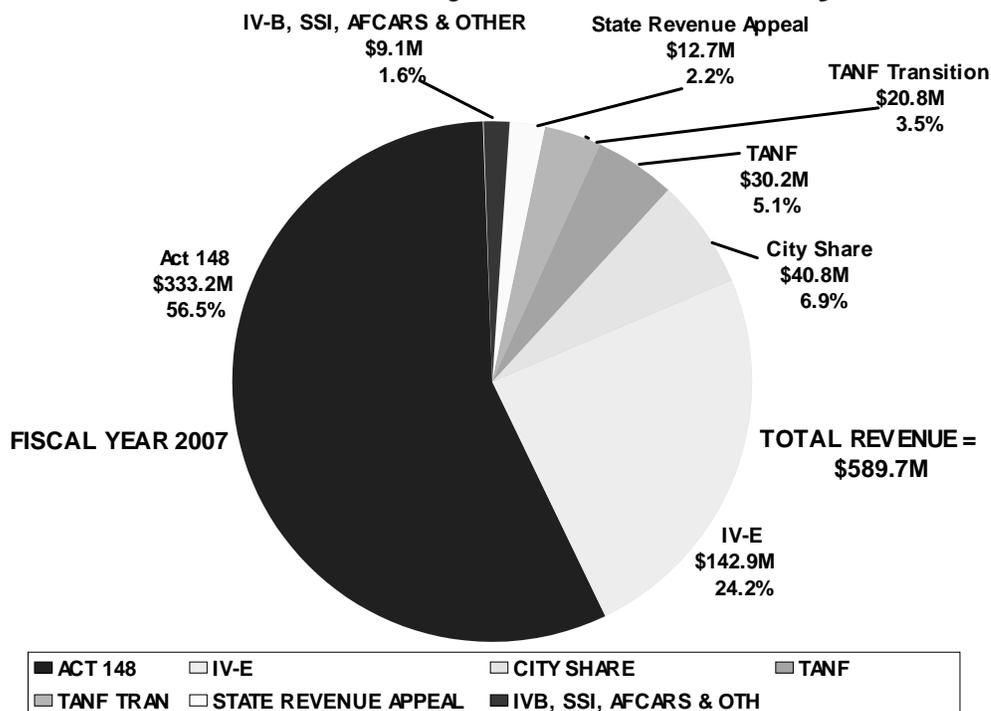
Part of DHS' work to ensure the well-being of children involves working with youth who have come to the attention of law enforcement. Unlike adult criminal prosecution and subsequent "punishment," the focus of delinquent services, when necessary, is the treatment, rehabilitation and supervision of youth through a balanced and restorative justice system.

Through a continuum of services that recognize delinquent behaviors as a symptom of risk factors such as personal life, family circumstances and the community environment, the Juvenile Justice Services Division provides services to delinquent youth in residential programs such as Foster Care, Group Homes, Institutions and In-Home programs such as Home-Based Detention, Aftercare and Day Treatment. DHS also operates the county detention center, the Youth Study Center and Community Based Detention Homes for youth whom the Court has determined to require confinement during the trial and planning phase.

DELINQUENT POPULATION



DHS General Fund Projected Revenue by Source



DHS Funding

The Philadelphia Department of Human Services receives its funding from several sources.

Act 148 Title IV-B reimburses counties for the some of the expense of providing social services to dependant children – those determined to be without proper parental care or control, subsistence, education as required by law, or other care or control necessary for his/her physical, mental, or emotional health or morals – or delinquent children - a child 10 years of age or older whom the Court has found to have committed a crime and who is in need of treatment, rehabilitation, or supervision.

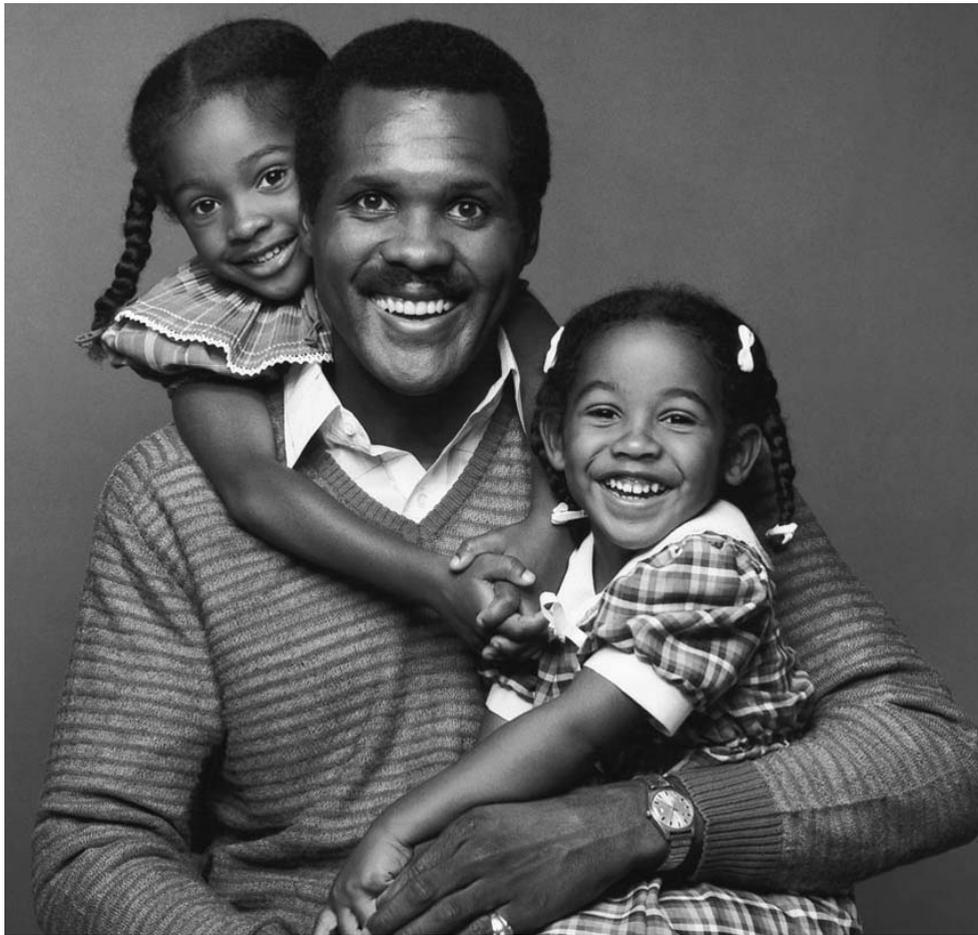
Title IV-E subsidizes a part of the costs involved in placing a child in a foster home or other placement for some children who come into care.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is a program in which all States, Territories and the District of Columbia are eligible for grants which are designed to assist needy families with children so that children can be cared for in their own homes; reduce dependency by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; reduce and prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

City Funds represent the portion of local tax dollars used to fund the Department.

Other Local includes Title ND parental support payments and other miscellaneous

Supplemental Security Income is a Federal program that provides benefits to people with disabilities, and is available to children with limited independence as a result of a physical or mental impairment.



The City of Philadelphia and the Department of Human Services do not discriminate, or permit discrimination against people because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap or marital status.

Child Abuse Hotline 215-683-6100



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