

Erie County Department of Social Services

Reorganization Proposal to the
Health & Human Services Committee
September 24, 2013

Local social services challenges

- Crime
 - Buffalo is the 11th most dangerous city in America
(FBI's Preliminary Annual Uniform Crime Report for 2012)
 - Crime and dropouts rampant in Buffalo's low-income areas
(NeighborhoodScout.com data)

Local social services challenges

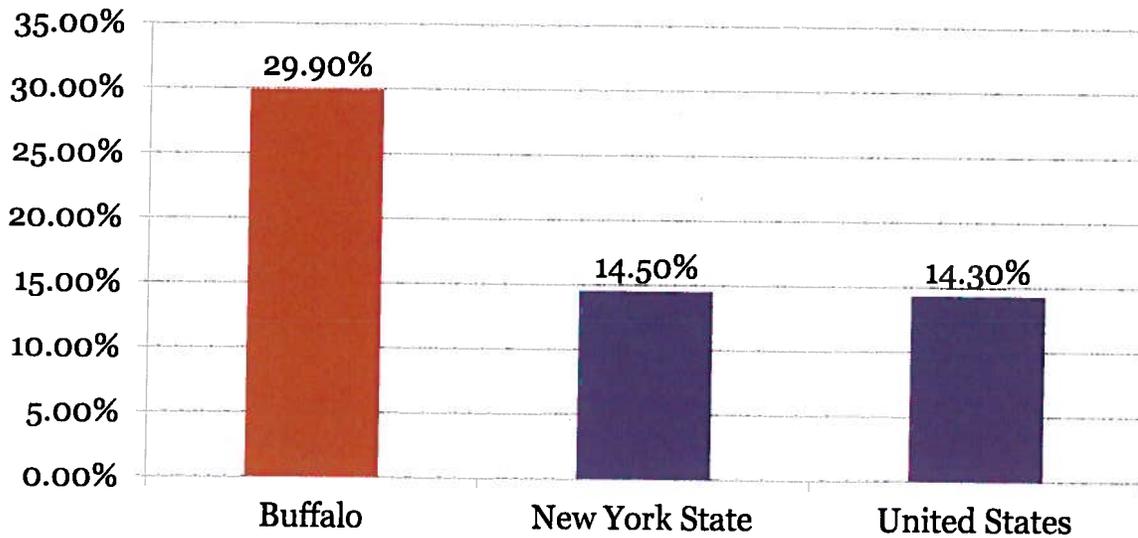
- **Poverty**
 - Buffalo has the 3rd-highest rate of child poverty nationally (National Center for Children Living in Poverty, 2011 Census data)
 - Poverty in WNY has spread to the suburbs (Brooking Institution Policy Program Analysis)
 - Buffalo ranks in top 10 in rates of minority poverty (American Community Survey of metro areas, 2011)

Local social services challenges

- **Health**
 - Buffalo is ranked the third poorest city in America with populations over 250,000 (U.S. Census Bureau data)
 - Buffalo's poverty and health problems go hand-in-hand (2010-2013 Community Health Assessment for Erie County)
 - Recent trends point to higher Erie County teen pregnancy rates (Erie County Health Department report, 2005-2007)
 - Obesity, smoking are more prevalent in Buffalo (2010-2013 Community Health Assessment for Erie County)

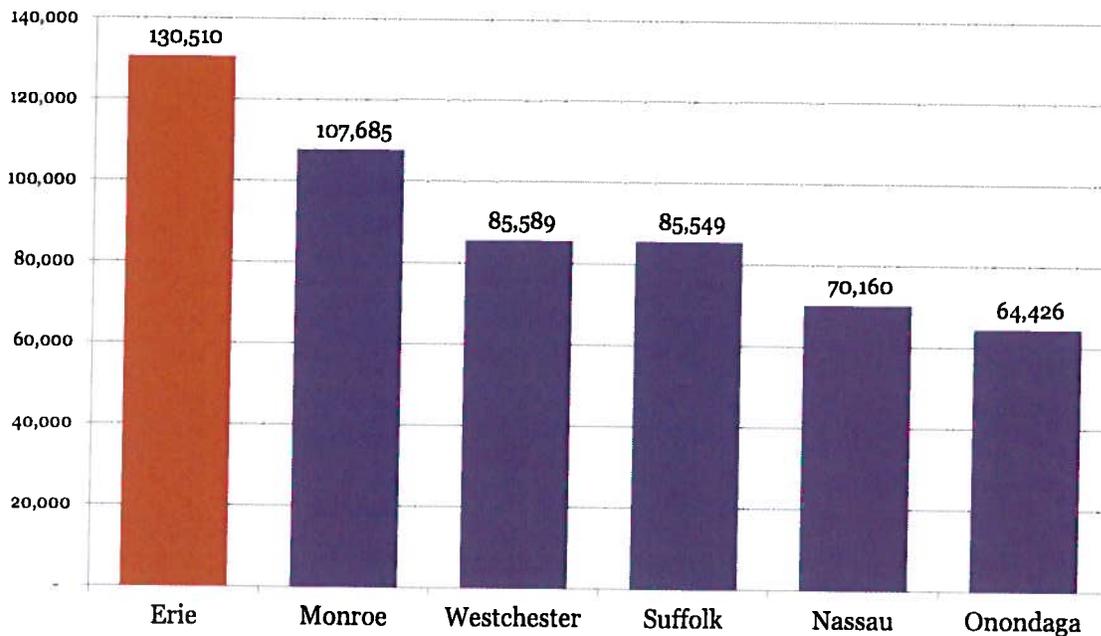
Persons Below Poverty Level

2007-2011



Benchmarking: Poverty of comparison counties

Number of people below poverty level





Poverty and health problems

- 15.1% more likely to have depression
- 6.1% more likely to have asthma
- 5.8% more likely to have obesity
- 4.7% more likely to have diabetes
- 2.7% more likely to have a heart attack

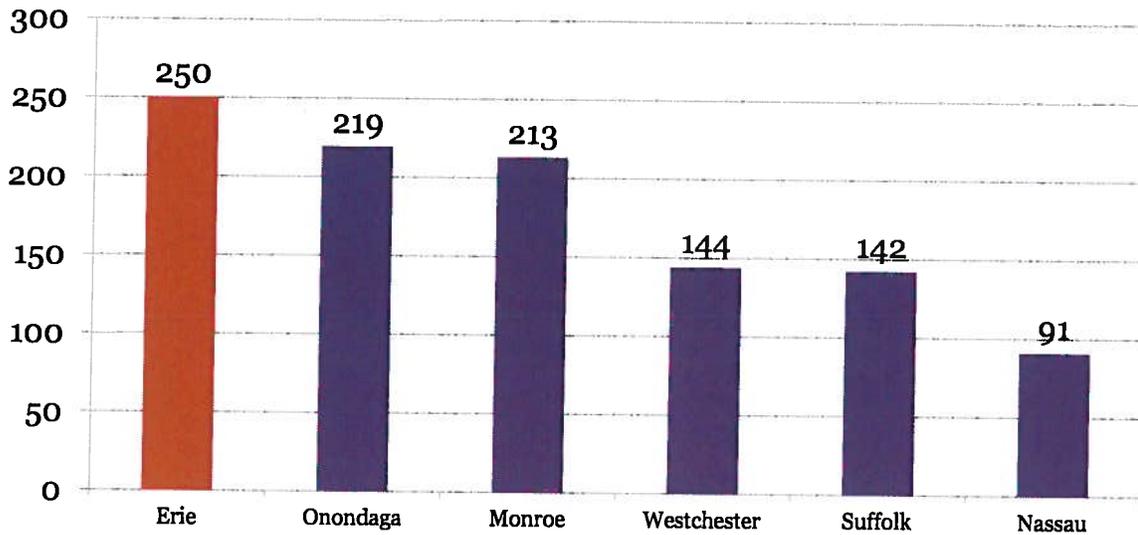


Erie County Department of
Social Services

Working to meet those challenges

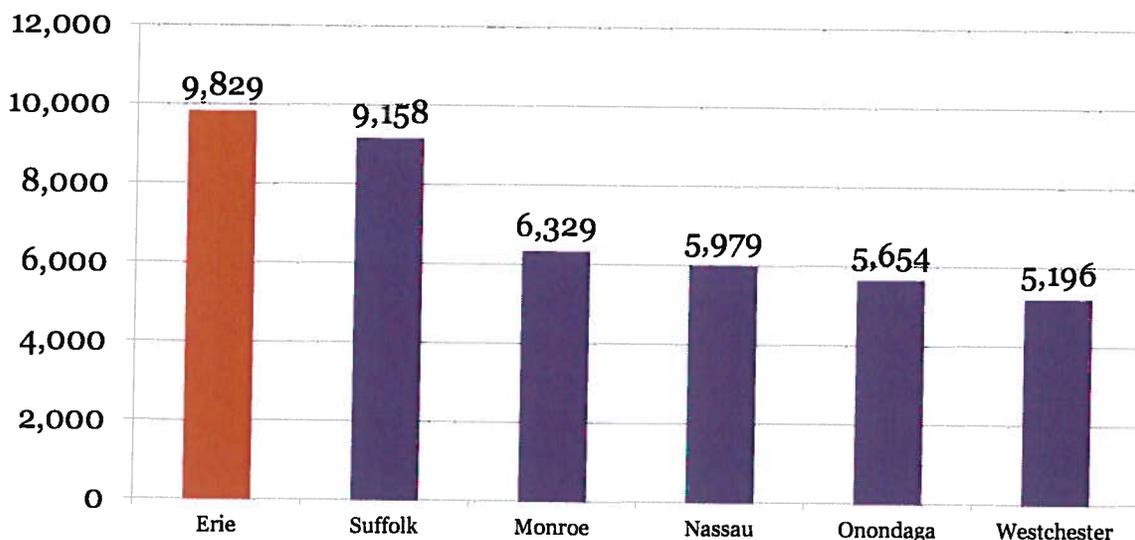
One-quarter of Erie County's population receives assistance

Number of cases per 1,000 residents



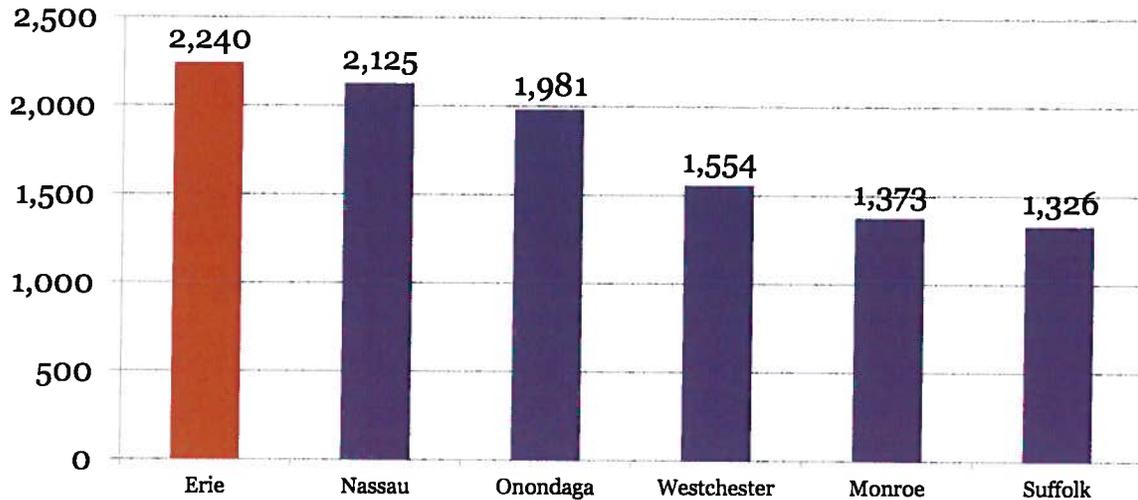
Erie County receives more child referrals than comparable counties

Number of reports for abuse and neglect in 2012



Erie County receives more adult referrals than comparable counties

Services to elderly, disabled adults and adults unable to manage their lives (05/12-06/13).

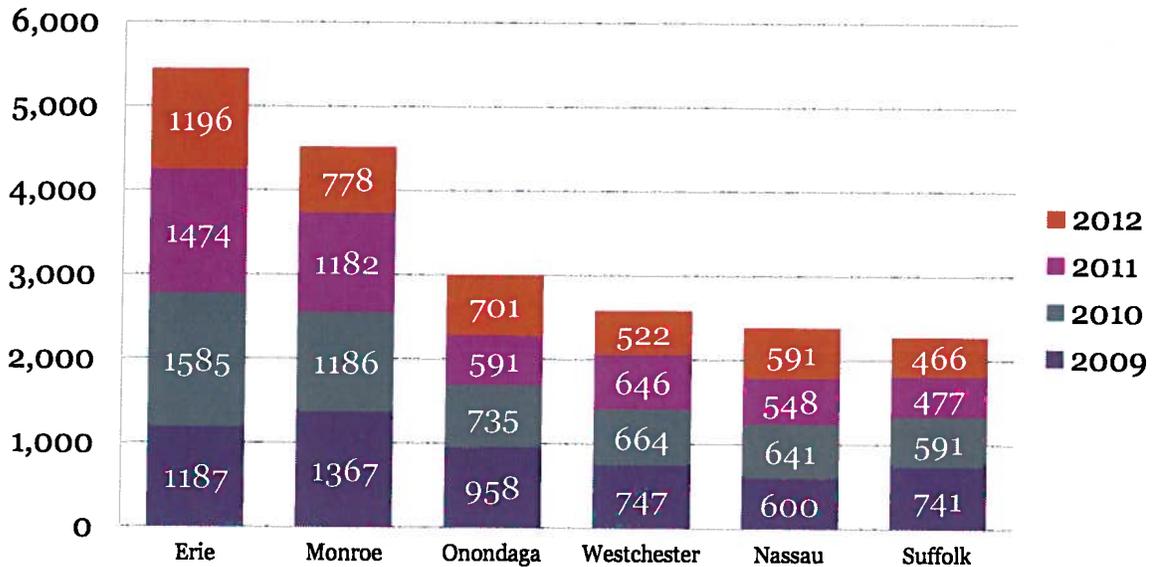


CPS services in Erie County

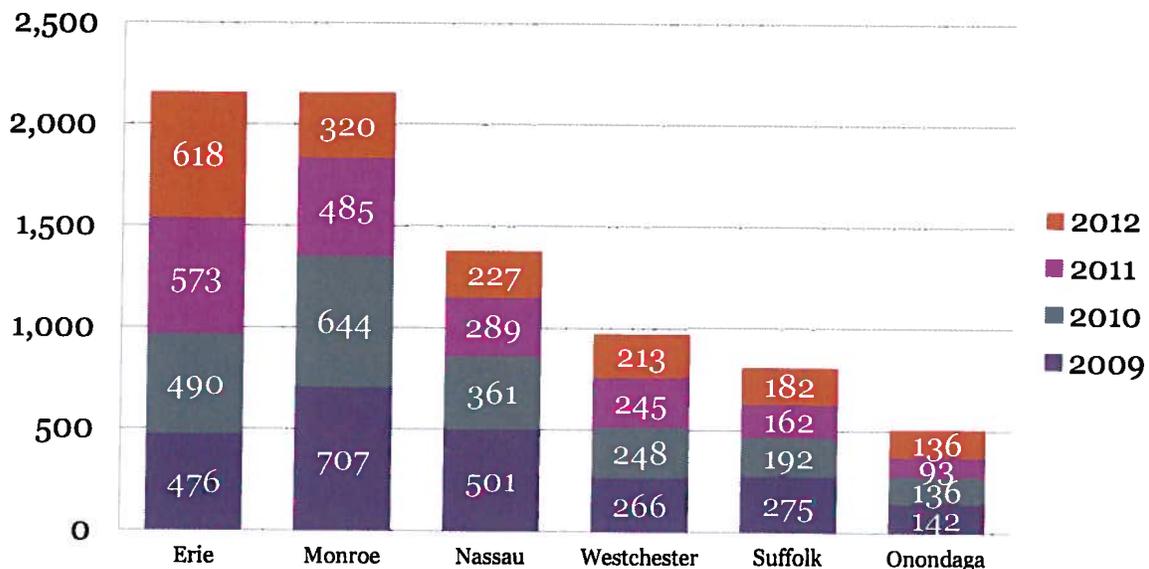
	2009	2010	2011	2012
SCR Reports	10,777	11,564	11,418	12,181
Indicated	24.5%	25.4%	27.3%	27.6%
FAR cases Percentage	79	692	983	695
%	.007%	.06%	.09%	.06%
Placed in Foster Care	433	440	476	401

*** For the 2013 2nd Quarter, the rate of Indicated SCR Reports has risen to 38% of all SCR Reports.**

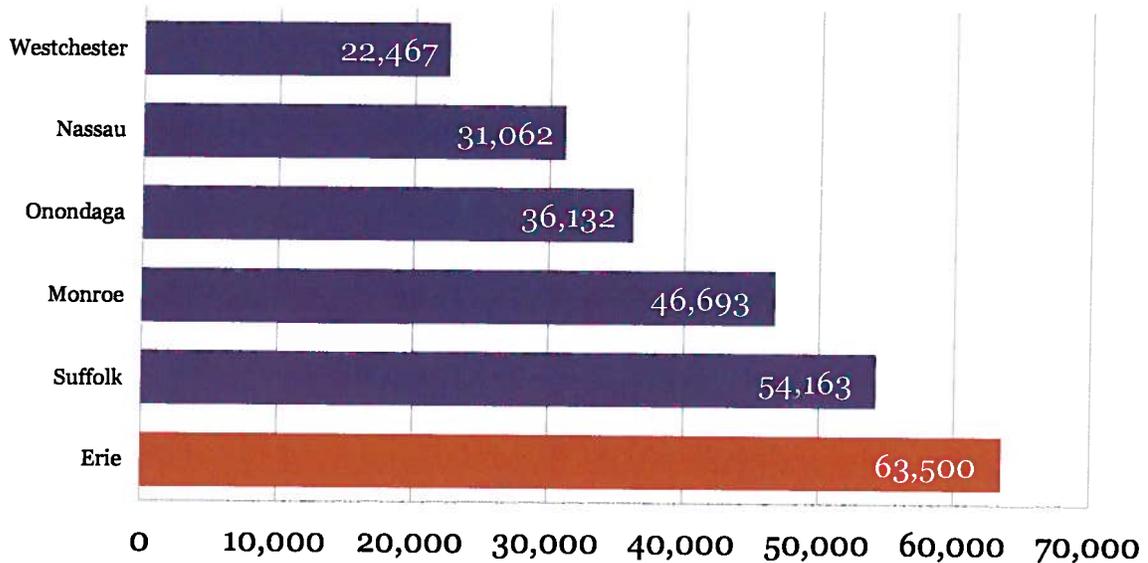
Erie County among the highest incidence of juvenile arrests



Erie County is among the highest for juvenile detention admissions



Erie County is among the highest in child support caseloads



Erie County Department of Social Services

Restructuring DSS to be proactive and nimble as we adapt to changing needs, resources and roles.

Vision

A community where children, adults and families are healthy and safe and enjoy a quality of life. As a responsive and efficient organization, we seek to continually engage the community in defining our role.

Comparables - The 6 Counties

	Population	DSS Budget	#Employees	Commissioner's Office/Directors	
Erie	919,086	\$600,000,000	1,500	8 Commissioner Level 4 Directors ----- 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Welfare • Benefits • Adult Protection • Detention/Youth Services
Westchester	961,670	\$565,000,000	1,055 (Restructuring Underway)	6 Commissioner Level 10 Directors ----- 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Welfare • Benefits • Adult Protection
Suffolk	1,499,273	\$600,000,000	1,600 (In Transition - Acting Commissioner)	9 Commissioner Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Welfare • Benefits • Housing • Adult Protection
Monroe	747,813	\$552,128,000	978	7 Commissioner Level 5 Directors ----- 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Welfare • Benefits • Mental Health • Youth/Detention • Senior Services (APS)
Onondaga	466,852	\$300,000,000	702 (Restructuring Underway)	6 Commissioner Level 10 Directors ----- 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Welfare • Benefits • Adult Protection
Nassau	1,349,233	\$500,000,000	644 (Restructured 2013)	7 Commissioner Level 14 Directors ----- 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Welfare • Benefits • Adult Protection

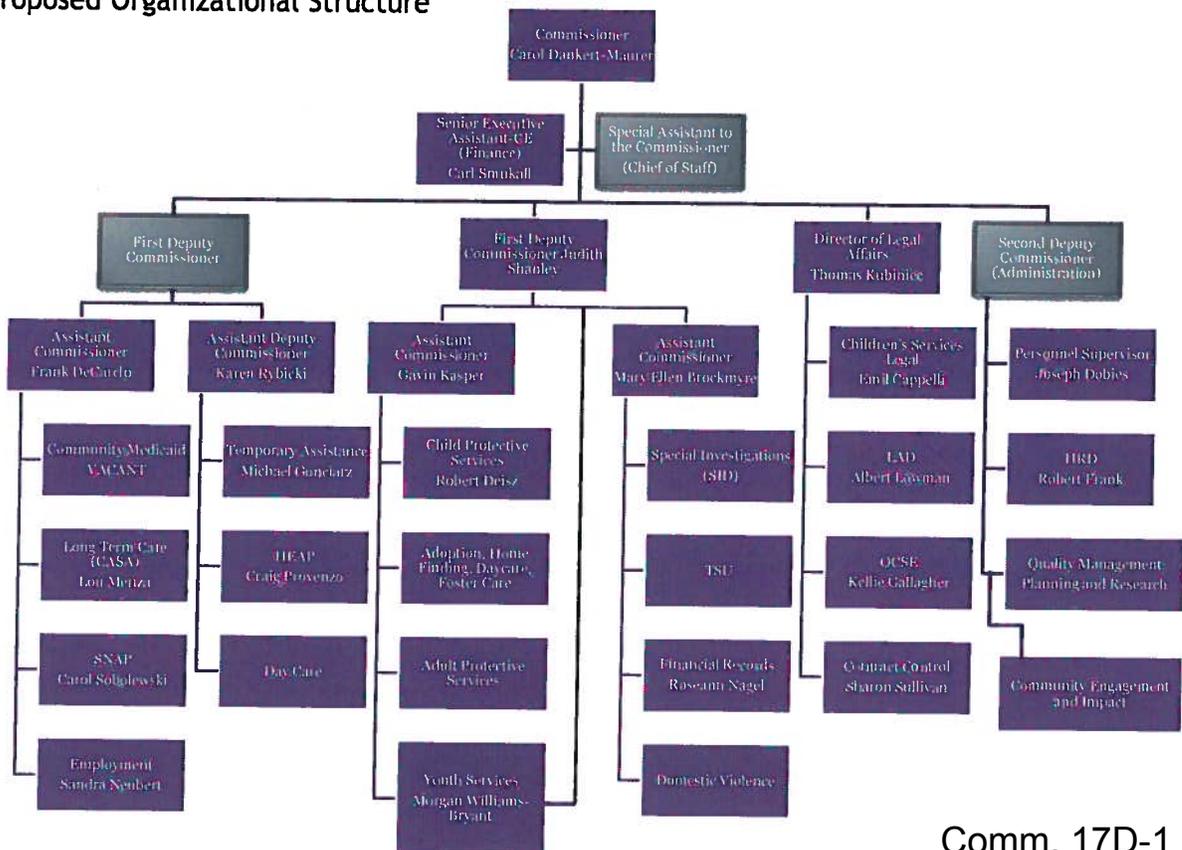
Proposal

- DSS be provided with three additional managerial positions to support Commissioner Dankert-Maurer and help fulfill the responsibilities of the department.

The new positions will be:

- First Deputy Commissioner
- Second Deputy Commissioner
- Special Assistant to the Commissioner
- CPS be provided seven additional positions to respond to allegations of abuse and neglect (SCR Reports).
 - Social Caseworker 1 (6)
 - Coordinator (1)

Proposed Organizational Structure



First Deputy Commissioner

- A second First Deputy Commissioner supports parallel bench strength for vision and action on the Family Independence agenda of DSS as currently exists on the Protection agenda.
- Along with the other First Deputy Commissioner, supervising Assistant Commissioners in execution and impact evaluation of DSS agendas and activities.
- Capacity to scan impending state and federal changes concurrent to researching different strategies for execution occurring in peer counties while adapting and applying learnings and opportunities for a 800-person Erie County workforce.
- Analysis of local trends in DSS and in the community to be translated into value add alignment -
 - Clarity in roles and responsibilities
 - Shared measures of impact
 - Collaborative planning for resource allocation and managing change

Second Deputy Commissioner

- Serving as the chief administrator, responsible for overseeing all human resources, personnel, training, planning & evaluation and logistics/operational issues.
- Responding to the massive changes in services and delivery presenting to all counties requires a workforce culture embracing flexibility and positioned to adapt.
- To be an effective Enterprise ECDSS front line divisions of Family Independence and Protection require a strong support division to supply the right people with the right skills aligned with the right technology and tools at the right time to achieve the intended results for citizens, the county and the community.

Special Asst. to the Commissioner

- Serving as the Chief of Staff for the department and a “troubleshooter” for the Commissioner.
- The complexity and urgency of issues presenting to the Commissioner from citizens, other units and levels of county government and from state/federal agencies requires an experienced, trained person always able to think global, act local.
- Research and prepare the reports and documents required at any and all levels of county government on current programs, emerging issues and integrated perspectives.

CPS Social Caseworkers 1 (6) CPS Coordinator (1)

- Respond timely to the demand for investigations of SCR Reports.
- Increase the depth and breadth of work with families identified as chronic neglect (5 or more SCRs of neglect, school attendance, or concurrent disabilities of alcohol, substance abuse, mental health or developmental disabilities).
- Reduce CPS Worker/investigation caseload to the 1:15 OCFS recommended ratio.
- Increase Quality Assurance activities measuring results to benchmarks and aligning with employee training and performance.
- Increase compliance with all regulatory timeframes for frequency, services and documentation.
- Increase clinical competence at all levels of the direct care workforce to identify individual/family root causes and implement successful interventions both directly and through best practice use of community agency resources.

The Bottom Line

- The annualized amount for the 7 CPS and 3 Management Positions is \$859,726.
 - **HOWEVER:** The local share for the administrative titles is 36.15%, whereas the local share for the CPS titles is 47.7%.
- The annualized local share is \$364,298.

Funding

For 2013, there are adequate funds to pay for the positions because the 2013 ECMCC Vocational Rehabilitation account was underutilized. Funds from this account will be re-appropriated.

For 2014, a funding plan will be proposed that assures no additional local costs will be incurred.

Challenges Inspire Opportunities

- With additional resources, ECDSS can have the leadership capacity to develop a platform of community impact that manages the workforce needed to provide services and benefits to children, adults and families.
- Concurrently, we will identify new best practices being utilized across the country, implement said practices (if appropriate) to align with our current reality of constant change and continual challenge.

An ambitious agenda to change our paradigm of action to proactive, not reactive.

Community and Child Well- Meeting the complex reality of a 21st-century family.

- Frame a Community Conversation to identify and prioritize concerns and catalog human service resources that can support community and child well-being.
- Cast the plan: **Smart Initiatives for a Stronger Community**
- Engage various subgroups on focused initiatives with clear results, clear measures and clear milestones.
- Report back every year on progress and new issues.

Emerging Populations - Erie County DSS has unprecedented diversity in the families we serve. Currently 59 languages are spoken among our customers.

- Increased diversity in our entire workforce, including our management team.
- Establish a community wide agenda for expanding services needed to support sufficiency and Family Independence of newly emigrating families.
- Identify the particular needs and barriers related to access of services to independence.
- Establish plans of action with our community partners to increase our community's ability to support self-sufficiency and family sustainability.

Strategic Alignment - Establishing the right linkages and partnerships with local human service agencies.

- Erie County Human Services Departments can improve customer experience and outcomes by working together using a more comprehensive assessment approach.
- A Human Services Cabinet within County Government to focus, target and plan for collaborative engagement for results, alignment of resources and improved customer experience.

Community Health - Poverty has a detrimental effect on the health of a community, with poor health translating into skyrocketing costs.

- Community Conversations – semi-annual summits.
- Engaging Health Foundation of WNY in their targets of children in poverty and frail elderly.
- Contract agency collaborations on health initiatives of impact and consensus.

Quality Assurance - Abundant policies and procedures require oversight and monitoring to assure compliance and quality services.

- **Compliance:** Are we achieving basics, minimum attention to risk factors?
- **Impact:**
 - Tracking/chronicling to risk, time and milestones.
 - Monitoring/managing complaints; assuring best customer experience.
 - Matching, utilization to impact.
 - Regular Community Conversations of impact/misses/best practice.

Technology - Erie County must move forward with innovations to assist all aspects of our work.

- **Examples:**
 - Westchester is using robo - calls, texting and e-mail to engage their clients and have reduced their no-show rate significantly.
 - Robust Data Warehouses that allow connecting of claims data to services data and results.
 - Electronic monitoring tools for compliance with standards.
 - Predictive analytics to support decision making moving forward and evaluation of impact looking back.
 - Data reports that highlight the types of services with results that reduce family disruption, decrease admissions to detention and result in independent youth from disrupted families as they enter adulthood.



Increased Transparency - Establishing public/private workgroups to improve the flow of information, performance data, and important updates to all.

- Semi-annual report card to legislature, community advisory board with community conversations that invite the community at large.
- Community Advisory Committee to the Commissioner that reviews utilization, services and resources.



Erie's Voice

DSS will develop a full advocacy agenda, ensuring Erie County is a leader in strong results, best practice, funding, compliance and technology; with one critical focus being an exceptional customer experience.

We will influence policy and execution at the federal, state and local levels to make certain that the needs of our community are met.



Economic Development-DSS can assist its clients by supporting economic development efforts.

- Establish internal Employment Resource Coordinating Council and database
- Establish vocational ESL program for refugee clients of DSS placement programs
- Publish annual Employment Training Resource Guide



Unlocked potential

- Community and Child Well-Being
- Emerging Populations
- Strategic Alignment
- Community Health
- Quality Assurance
- Technology
- Increased Transparency
- Erie's Voice
- Economic Development

Measuring Success

- **Family Independence Initiatives**
 - Change in Safety Net Caseload
 - Duration in stays in Emergency Homeless Shelters
 - Benefit application processing time
- **Family Protection Initiatives**
 - Implementation of new evidence-based measures
 - Collaboration between county and partners
 - Customer service experience