

Department of Human Services

This month's Tidbit is focusing on services provided by the Department of Human Services. Some services you may already know about, some services may be new to you, and some may be reminders of what DHS can offer.

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Human Services is to improve the well-being of economically disadvantaged, disabled or vulnerable Tennesseans through a network of financial, employment, rehabilitative and protective services. The Department is responsible for administering more than 10 types of services through Tennessee, including Families First, Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid/TennCare, Child Support, Child Care, Adult Protective Services, and Rehabilitation Services.

Program Descriptions:

Adult and Family Services:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – Tennessee's TANF program is called Families First and is a welfare reform program. This is a temporary cash assistance program that emphasizes work, training, education and personal responsibility. A variety of other support services are available to help customers make the transition to self-sufficiency.

Food Stamp Program – nutrition assistance program provides a safety net for elderly, disabled, families with children, or other low income households to help maximize food dollars for purchasing food and seeds to grow food.

TennCare Medicaid & TennCare Standard – Tennessee's medical assistance programs which provide health care for low-income individuals and families who otherwise could not afford it.

Child Care Assistance – for Families First recipients and low-income families. Assistance available for purchasing child care while the parents are enrolled in Families First job-related training programs, job search or seeking employment.

Adult Protective Services – services for adults, 18 years of age or older who are abused, neglected, or financially exploited and unable to protect themselves due to mental or physical disabilities or advanced age. If abuse is suspected in a nursing home situation, this program can monitor the situation to determine what is really happening.

Child Support Services:

Child Support – services to help families locate absent parents, obtain child support, enforce child support orders, or establish paternity.

Rehabilitation Services:

Vocational Rehabilitation – Provides assistance to Tennesseans with disabilities to promote employment. Services may include medical, psychological or vocational assessments, training, medical services, job development and job placement.

Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired – Provides rehabilitation services to the blind or visually impaired to promote employment, independent living, and adjustment to blindness. This program also provides some emergency medical treatment to prevent blindness to those who cannot afford such treatment.

TN Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing – Coordinates communication, information, and advocacy services for deaf Tennesseans through regional Community Service Centers for the deaf.

TN Rehabilitation Center at Smyrna – The only state-operated residential vocational rehabilitation training facility, which offers vocational evaluation, training, Independent Living Skills Training, job development and job placement.

Ann Pennell, CPS

Disability Program Navigator/Business Services
Northwest Tennessee Workforce Board
313 West Cedar Street
Dyersburg, TN 38024
(731) 286-3585, extension 20
pennell@nwtntworks.org