

County Department of Community and Family Services to Reduce Public Hours for Select Divisions Next Week

Change in Hours Designed to Shorten Application Process Time for Residents, Save Overtime Costs

Poughkeepsie. . . Effective January 9th, the Dutchess County Department of Community and Family Services (DCFS), formerly known as the Department of Social Services, will begin a pilot project on Wednesdays, limiting intakes for Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program or SNAP), Medicaid and Home Energy Assistance. Staff in these divisions will work regular hours, focusing on completing required paperwork to ensure families and individuals receive the benefits they need, without the County incurring overtime costs. There will be no client interviews or meetings on Wednesdays for those divisions. This change is expected to save \$100,000 in overtime costs annually.

Individuals or families in emergency situations, such as utility shut-off, eviction, or no food or heating fuel, will still be served in person on Wednesdays. Emergencies will be handled by staff from the Adult Services Division. Residents can also complete benefit applications, drop off documents, or pick up benefit checks in the Department's reception area.

According to Dutchess County Department of Community and Family Services Commissioner Robert Allers, the County has seen an 18% increase in Temporary Assistance applications, a 53% increase in Medicaid applications and a 103% increase in Food Stamp (SNAP) applications over the past five years. The corresponding increase in paperwork volume has resulted in rising overtime costs and longer processing times.

“Our goal with this change is to ensure the state required paperwork is

completed as quickly as possible so residents can get the benefits they need to get back on track to stability. We will also be able to save taxpayers the growing overtime costs that have been necessary to keep up with the increased volume of paperwork,” said Commissioner Allers.

Certain benefit applications do not even require a visit to DCFS offices. Residents can go to www.myBenefits.ny.gov to find out about a number of work support programs that they may be eligible for and can apply online for certain benefits including Food Stamps (SNAP) and HEAP.

All other DCFS divisions, including Adult Services, Children’s Services (including Child Protective Services and Foster Care), Child Support Enforcement, Special Investigations, Legal and Youth Services, will remain on the normal work week schedules.

For more information about the programs and services available through the Dutchess County Department of Community and Family Services, go to www.dutchessny.gov.

###