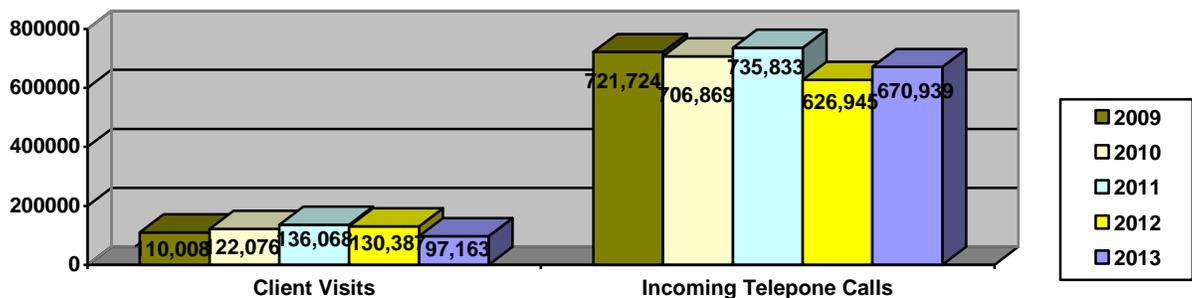


## Burlington County Board of Social Services 2013 In Review

The Burlington County Board of Social Services is an independent county agency responsible for administering social economic programs to the residents of all of Burlington County. As an independent public agency authorized under Chapter 7, Title 44, whose roots can be traced to the passage of the New Jersey “Old Age Relief Act” of April 24, 1931, and the Federal Social Security Act approved August 14, 1935, the agency belongs to the community. It’s Board, which governs the actions of the Board of Social Services, is comprised of seven (7) citizens of the County, two (2) members of the County’s Board of Chosen Freeholders and the County Adjuster. Daily operations of the agency are performed under the guidance and direction of the agency’s Director. All agency staff are hired and promoted in accordance with N.J.A.C.4A, as required under federal regulations.

Throughout 2013, the Burlington County Board of Social Services continued to face the daunting challenge of serving an overwhelming number of residents adversely affected first by the recession which began over six years ago, and which is continuing through the economy’s anemic recovery, as well as a large number of unanticipated employees leaving the agency. Despite the efforts by the federal government, continued efforts to assist the unemployed by extending unemployment compensation benefits well beyond the normal allotted eligibility periods, the Burlington County Board of Social Services, the last resort for many of the residents of the county facing economic or social hardship, continued to see double digit increases in our programs since 2007. Since the beginning of the economic down turn, there have been an overwhelming number of county residents in need of help in Burlington County who were adversely affected by the economy. Given the high level of demand for services and constrained streams of revenue the agency’s staff continued to experience a severe strain in meeting our obligation to the customers to issue needed benefits in a timely manner, given the limitation of the State’s computer systems and the limitations of funding for expanding the number of staff. During the calendar year of 2013, approximately **97,163** individuals came through the doors of the Burlington County Board of Social Services seeking help for their economic and/or social problem(s). This figure does not represent the number of different individuals seeking help, rather the cumulative number of contacts each day with individuals throughout the year. In addition to the daily influx of people coming through our doors, the agency processed more than **670,939** incoming telephone calls and **56,759** incoming pieces of mail throughout 2013. All of these numbers represent a significant increase of activity since the recession began.

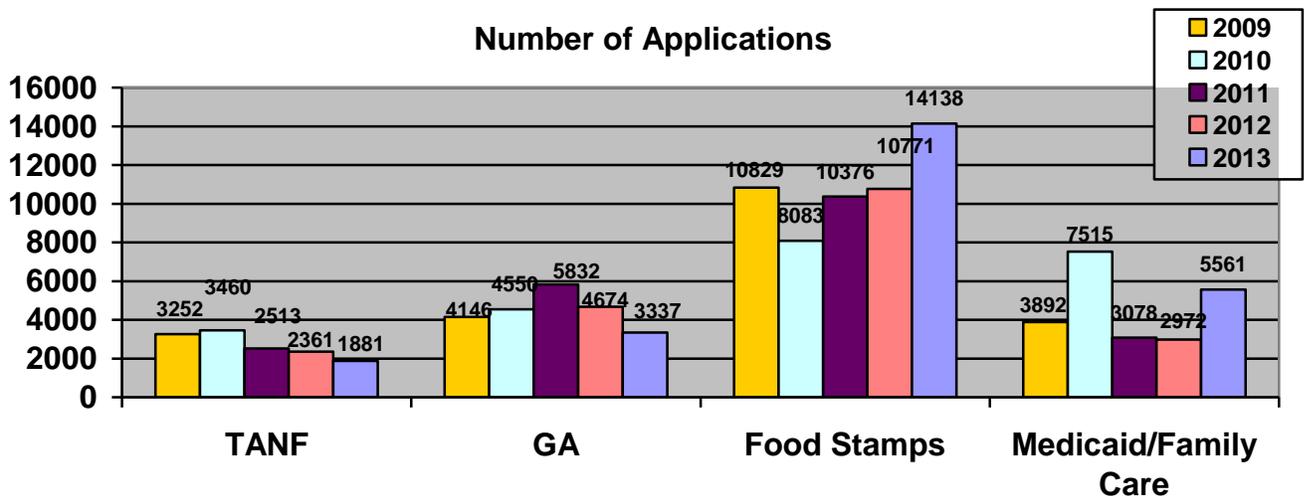


A careful examination of the number of residents receiving welfare benefits under the General Assistance Program (GA) during 2013, show a continuation of last year's decrease during the last six (6) months of the year, with a significant steady monthly decrease throughout the year. The abrupt reversal in the number of individuals and couples receiving GA during 2013 can be directly tied to the State's July 2011 policy change requiring a GA applicant to participate in an approved work activity for twenty-eight days before their case can be granted. Unfortunately, while the number of county residents receiving GA has continued to decrease, the number of individuals applying for the program continued at the same high level as was present prior to the July 2011 program change and continues to require the agency to allocate significant staff and resources to the program to only then turn around and deny a large percentage of the clients' applications.

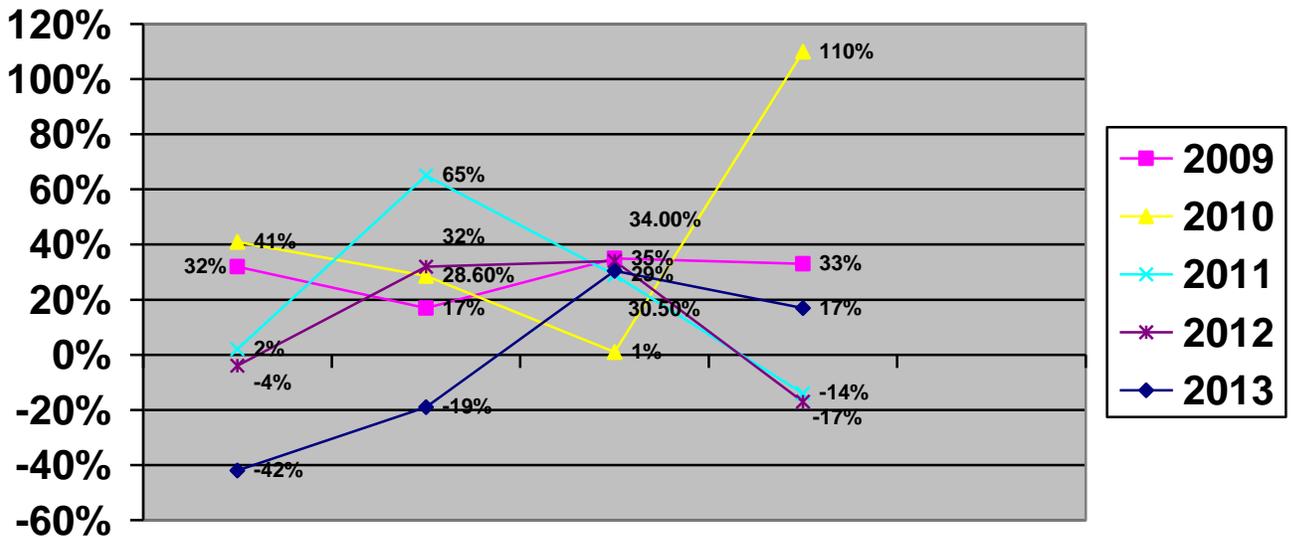
In addition, an increasing number of residents are being forced to seek help through on our social programs as households struggle due to the exhaustion of their unemployment benefits and stagnant wages.

A clearer picture of the economic plight of County residents is illustrated by the increased demand and reliance upon all of the agency's programs. This is clearly supported by an examination of the number of applications taken for each of the programs administered by the agency over the last six years:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Number of Applications</u>					<u>% Change since 2009</u>
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
TANF	3,252	3,460	2,513	2,361	1,881	-42%
GA	4,146	4,550	5,832	4,674	3,337	-19%
Food Stamps (NPA)	10,829	8,083	10,376	10,771	14,138	30.5%
Medicaid/Family Care	4,750	7,515	3,078	2,972	5,561	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,977</b>	<b>23,608</b>	<b>21,799</b>	<b>20,778</b>	<b>24,917</b>	



## % Change since 2009



The following is a brief summary of some of the agency’s programs activity for 2013.

### Income Maintenance Department

During 2013, the Income Maintenance Department continued the 2012 challenge and restructured how they took and processed applications for all their social programs, as well as managed the cases for those clients who received benefits through the agency. Under partnership with the New Jersey Division of Family Development, they moved from a case load processing model where an employee is assigned total responsibility for an individual case to a case banking model where an employee is assigned a particular function and a team of employees is responsible for an individual’s case. This model allows the supervisor and department administrators to determine on a daily basis where to assign their limited resources to meet the daily needs of the agency clients. Unfortunately, the agency continues to experience a large number of staff leaving the agency. As we are making strides hiring new employees, this once again increased the number of applications that are over thirty days old.

#### *Customer Service*

The Customer Service Unit assisted and screened a total of 22,748 individuals during 2013; an average of 1,896 customers per month, a continued level of increase of 10% over 2012 when 20,603 customers were seen. In addition, 7,265 applications were received electronically via New Jersey’s NJ ONE APP application process; a 12% increase over the 6,466 received and processed in 2012.

The shift in responsibility for the registration and processing of the electronic applications undertaken in 2011 due to the large number of residents applying for help electronically, has proven very successful and

allowed us to schedule and interview applicants, in a more timely manner. The quicker turn-around has allowed the agency the ability to process the applications within a quicker time frame.

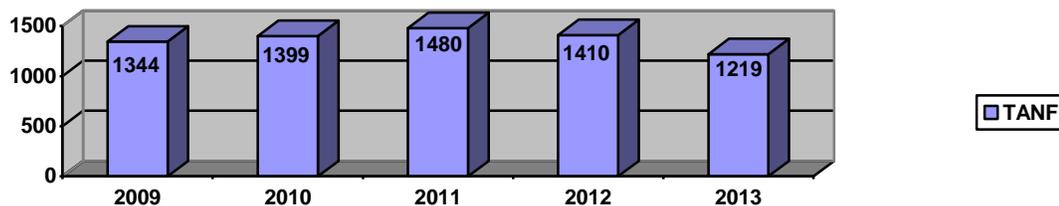
Another innovative change introduced by the agency in the second half of 2012 under the Income Maintenance Department's restructuring, was the roll out of the agency's Call Center in the agency's Customer Service Unit. The Call Center allows the public to call during agency business hours and speak to an individual who is able to answer basic questions about the programs we administer or basic questions about the caller's case. If a question requires something more than can be obtained from a quick review of information on a computer screen, a message is taken and a return phone call is made to the client within twenty four (24) hours of the original call. During 2012, the Call Center received 41,083 calls. Since this procedure was in place the last 6 months of 2012, we cannot determine a percentage change.

### **TANF**

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, (TANF) is a federally funded State supervised program that provides time-limited cash assistance to families with children less than eighteen (18) years of age. Benefits are meant to provide a temporary bridge while individuals seek and achieve self-sufficiency through employment. Benefits are limited to a lifetime maximum of sixty (60) cumulative months and seeking and accepting employment is a primary requirement for continuing to receive assistance.

The bright spot for many families forced to apply for TANF is if found eligible, the family not only receives financial help but will receive help to retain their permanent housing, or if homeless, help in securing housing as well as help in securing employment and training for career advancement.

**TANF Growth for the period 2008 through 2013**



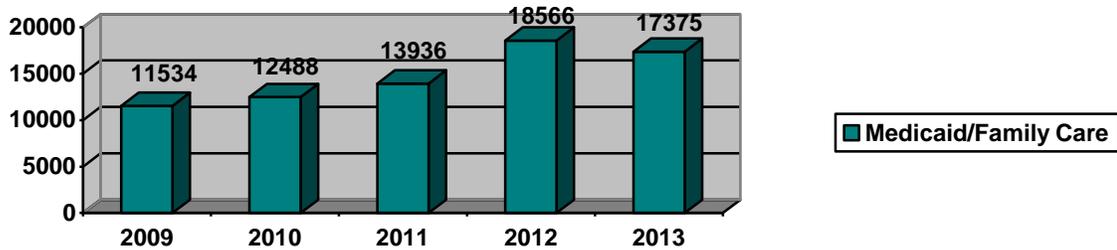
### **Medicaid/Family Care**

2013 saw a slight decrease in Medicaid/Family Care cases throughout the year. The agency took 6,346 applications in 2013, compared to 7,999 in 2012. The average monthly caseload during 2013 is 17,375, down 6% from 2012's monthly caseload of 18,566. The Medicaid Program consists of Medicaid Extension, Medicaid Only, Medicaid Special, and Family Care. Each of the Medicaid Programs have a maze of different rules and regulations that the staff are required to be familiar with as well as different level of funding from the Federal and State. Staff is not only required to process the 6,346 new applications seeking health care coverage, but to also process an additional 11,827 applications who sought to continue their eligibility for coverage under Medicaid/Family Care.

New Jersey's universal health care coverage for children initiative as well as the ability to submit a Family Care application electronically has greatly facilitated in the expansion of the Family Care Medicaid Program. This in conjunction with the economic recession has seen an increase in families being forced to apply for Family Care

when they lose their employer sponsored health care coverage. The ability to submit applications electronically has resulted in an increased number of applications being submitted directly without going through the agency's Customer Service Unit and thereby reducing the number of individuals and families who are required to come into the agency.

### Medicaid/Family Care Growth for the period 2008 through 2012

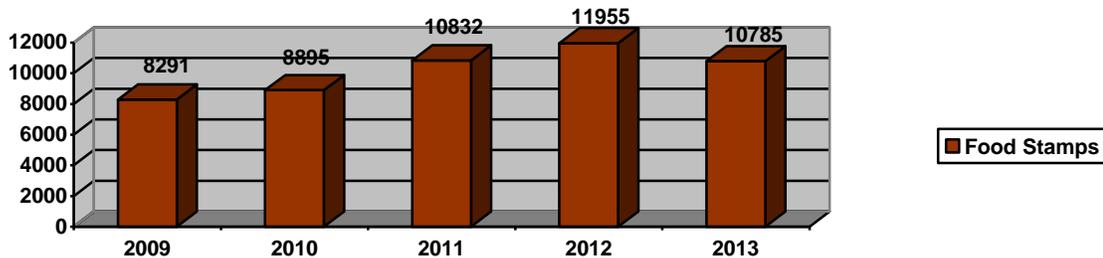


### NJ SNAP (Food Stamps)

The Supplemental Nutrition Program, formerly known as Food Stamps, is a federal nutrition program designed to promote the general welfare and safeguard the health and well-being of the population by raising nutritional levels for low income households. In 2010, the State of New Jersey adopted the Federal name of the program and the program is now recognized by the name NJ SNAP.

The NPA and PA NJ SNAP (Food Stamps) caseload continued its dramatic average caseload during 2013 to 10,785 cases. (PA Food Stamps are cases that also receive TANF while NPA Food Stamps do not receive TANF). This represents an increase of 201% increase over 2008's monthly caseload of 3,979. Food Stamps and Family Care represent the first level of assistance that many families require when they lose employment and are collecting or waiting to collect unemployment benefits. Due to the number of new applications seeking SNAP benefits, the large number of applications seeking to continue to receive SNAP benefits, as well as the loss of experienced staff, the agency struggled to meet the thirty (30) day time frame in which to process SNAP applications.

### Food Stamp Growth for the period 2007 through 2012



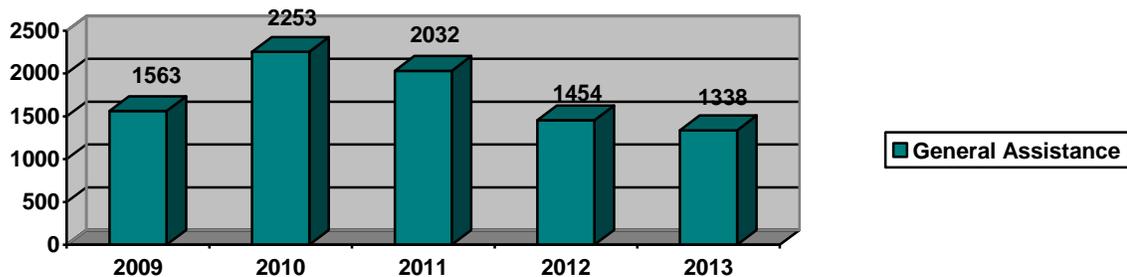
### General Assistance

New Jersey remains one of the few states which provide cash assistance to individuals or childless

couples. The General Assistance (GA) Program is a State program supervised by the New Jersey Division of Family Development. The General Assistance (GA) Program in Burlington County has been totally consolidated under the agency's administrative responsibility.

GA, with its high customer rate of turnover and homeless customers, saw a continued decrease in the program's caseload during 2013. The decrease in caseload can be directly attributed to the introduction of the twenty-eight day work activity requirement before the case may be granted by the State which went into effect July 2011. While December 2012's caseload of 1454 represents a 28% decrease over December 2011's monthly caseload of 2,032, there is a minimal change over 2008's monthly average caseload of 1,563. Unfortunately, this significant decrease in the caseload has not represented a corresponding decrease level of work for staff due to the continuing high number of applications being received for the program as is illustrated by the 3,337 applications taken during 2013, compared by the 4,079 applications taken in 2012.

**General Assistance Growth for the period 2008 through 2013**

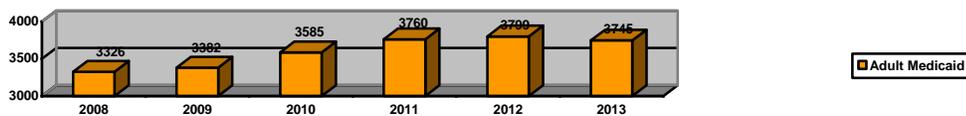


**Adult Medicaid**

Adult Medicaid is responsible for administering nine different Federal and State Medicaid programs geared toward the senior and disabled population. During 2013, the agency continued to see the Adult Medicaid caseload increase from a 2008 monthly average caseload of 3,326 to a 2013 monthly caseload of 3,745. This represents an increase of 12.5% over 2008's caseload. In 2013, there were 1,615 intakes, which resulted in 391 denials. There were 3,046 redeterminations completed in 2013 to continue their Medicaid eligibility.

In addition to administering the Adult Medicaid caseload, the unit received 188 requests for burials which resulted in 241 payments being made to vendors. The unit was also reimbursed \$408,310.10 through repayments under program regulations and computer matches. Funds recovered are returned to the State, but the agency may retain up to 25% of funds collected.

**Adult Medicaid Caseload Growth for the period 2007 through 2013**



### ***Home Energy Assistance***

This past heating season saw the continued processing of automatic payment through the NJ SNAP Program for those eligible for the HEA Program. The HEA Program is operated on behalf of the County through the combined effort of Burlington County Community Action Program and the Board of Social Services under the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' direction.

## **Child Support and Paternity Department**

Services provided under the Child Support and Paternity Department (CSP) are available to all residents of Burlington County and are not limited to those receiving TANF and/or Medicaid. 2012 proved to be a year of transition in CSP. While faced with the challenge of losing half of their staff, which has not been replaced, the remaining staff continued to exceed State averages in key performance areas. During 2013, the staff of the CSP Department completed:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Number completed</b>					<b>% Change</b>
	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>	<b><u>2013</u></b>	
<b>Processed genetic testing</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>-2%</b>
<b>CSP Interviews Conducted</b>	<b>2,158</b>	<b>1,860</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>1,812</b>	<b>1,480</b>	<b>-18%</b>
<b>DYFS Referrals</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Cases Referred for Court</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>1,076</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Paternity Established</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>-4%</b>
<b>Non-custodial Parents Located</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>1,208</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>1,741</b>	<b>111%</b>
<b>Active cases</b>	<b>1,722</b>	<b>2,155</b>	<b>2,223</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>1,068</b>	<b>-23%</b>

In addition, we continue to meet monthly with various partners that include Presiding Family Judge, Hearing Officers, and staff from Family Court and Probation. Our main focus at these meetings is NJ Kids and how we can work together to resolve problems when they arise. Agency staff has worked in partnership with the State and other Child Support partnering agencies in the continued development and resolving of problems with the new Child Support and Paternity computer program, New Jersey KIDS as well as the New Jersey Child Support Training Institute.

We continue to outreach to inmates in order to afford them the opportunity to consent to paternity of a child or request genetic testing.

## **Section 8 Rental Assistance**

2013, like 2012, continued to be a period of transition for the Section 8 Rental Assistance Program administered by the Burlington County Board of Social Services, as the program continued to respond to declining revenue from HUD.

By the close of 2013, the Section 8 Voucher Program had a total of sixty (60) Port-In's. (Port-Ins are active participants from another Public Housing Agency who have moved into our jurisdiction). We receive an administrative fee from the other housing Agencies to manage the voucher though we can absorb the Port-In if we want. At this time, we have not been absorbing many Port-Ins as they decrease the number of vouchers available to county residents, however, this practice is being re-examined as a possible cost saving measure for 2014.

During 2013, the following is Program Activity:

498	Current Enrollment
325	Elderly & Disabled
678	Minors (Family members under 18)
1,563	Household Size
60	Portability-In
20	Portability-Out
19	Terminations

During the end of 2012, the Section Eight Voucher Program began to work in partnership with the agency's Emergency Assistance (EA) staff to locate and assist EA clients who were on our waiting list into a voucher and permanent housing. This is proving to be very beneficial as "Homeless" Section 8 applications are the program's number one preference, second only to "Homeless Veteran". In addition, by working with the EA staff, we have been able to locate homeless clients who previously failed to submit updated mailing addresses. It has also allowed for an increased number of homeless EA clients to move into permanent housing.

## **Social Services**

The Social Services Department of the Burlington County Board of Social Services continues to provide service needs for a number of vulnerable populations in the county. These include the elderly, disabled, mentally ill, developmentally disabled, and at risk families with minor children. The continuing sluggish economy continues to place many of our county's most vulnerable residents at risk.

To help ensure the needs of our county residents are met we continue to develop and maintain vital connections in the community by remaining an active participant in the county's social service network. Our participation in the Comprehensive Emergency Assistance System (CEAS), Office on Aging's Provider and Long Term Care Committees, heat Advisory, EMS, Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness Committee, Mortgage Foreclosure Forum, TANF Initiative for Parents (TIP), and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) as well as our ongoing engagement with the Division of Children Protection and Permanency (DCOO) and the Domestic Violence Network, help to ensure that our clients can optimize access to an array of services that complement the programs and services we administer.

### ***Emergency Assistance (EA)***

The EA Unit is responsible for working with customers in addressing their housing and social service needs who receive TANF, GA or SSI. The most prevalent need of our clients relates to housing involves issues of help with back rent/mortgage, back utilities, or help in moving into new housing and seeking help with security deposit and/or first months rent. Unfortunately, the majority of our clients' housing needs involve actual homelessness which first requires an emergency placement. A shelter or supervised placement is always considered first. In the event that a shelter placement is unavailable, a motel placement may become necessary.

Emergency placements are arranged with consideration for the client's need to remain close to medical care providers, jobs, work activities, and children's schools. Clients are required to participate in the development and formation of a social service plan that outlines their responsibilities, goals and objectives for becoming self sufficient and for finding and maintaining their own permanent housing.

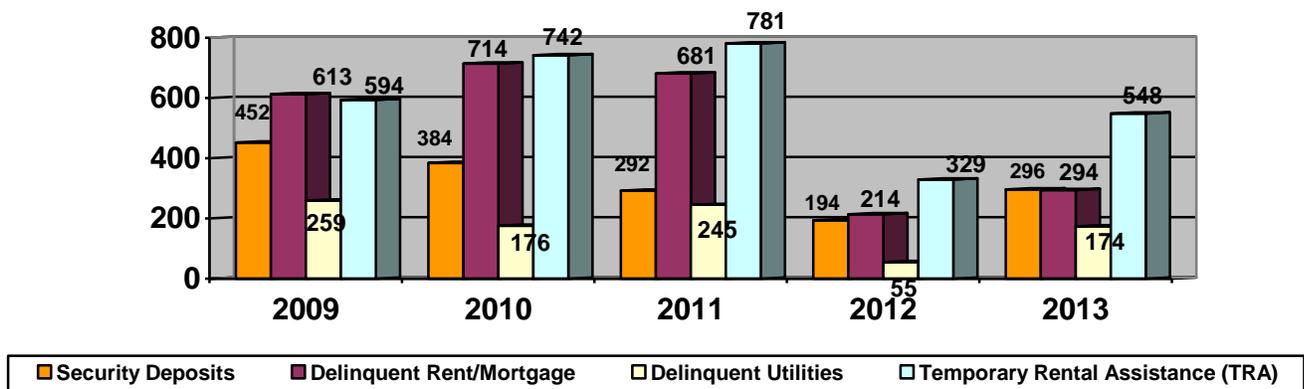
Sadly, some of EA recipients jeopardize their housing through destruction of property, substance abuse, and other inappropriate behavior. Termination of benefits, subsequent re-housing pending legal action, and/or hospitalization and incarceration involve reconsideration of placements and re-participation in another service plan. Referrals are made to appropriate partnering agencies to assist clients in maintaining their benefits, and follow up is sought to reinforce a team approach in assisting customers overcome their barriers to maintaining housing which can include substance abuse and mental health issues.

A total of 1,726 applications were submitted for the EA Program during 2013. During the year, we made 2,423 payments of behalf of TANF, GA and SSI clients in 2013. The most prevalent service is homeless households being placed in shelters and motels. Scattered site housing options provided by People First, Belmont Homes, Family Service, and Impact Ministries afford us the best opportunity to offer temporary emergency placement in a supervised setting. On average, 550 families and individuals were processed monthly, which required verifying compliance with service plans and reauthorizing placement for each family or individual being housed in scattered site housing, shelters and motels.

In addition to homeless placements, we processed:

<u>Service</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>				
	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Security Deposits	296	194	292	384	452
Delinquent rent/mortgage	294	214	681	714	613
Delinquent utilities	174	55	245	176	259
Temporary Rental Asst.	548	329	781	742	594

**Services Growth 2007 - 2013**



Much of the Emergency Assistance Program’s success this year is due to the close work that was done in partnership with other community agencies and organizations, which include Providence House, DYFS, Drenk, Family Services, Delaware House, BCCAP, Emergency Services, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Christian Caring Center, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Legal Services, Screening Crisis Intervention Program, Contact, United Way, and Crossroads. Through ongoing partnerships with community entities, we have been

able to maintain an effective partnering approach for resolving customer issues.

### ***Family Violence Option (FVO) Program***

The agency's Family Violence Option (FVO) Program allows the agency's designated FVO social worker to work closely with families and individuals who have identified issues of family violence in their lives. It is the responsibility of the "FVO" worker to work closely and to coordinate referrals and services with the client and Providence House, the County's domestic violence agency to ensure the necessary services, such as counseling victim and children, formation of a safety plan, advocacy for legal assistance and housing are provided. Additionally, the FVO social worker acts as an advocate on the customer's behalf to ensure that any waivers or deferrals are completed in their dealings with WFNJ and program time limits. The FVO Program is administered through the agency's EA Unit.

### ***Adult Protective Services***

The Adult Protective Services (APS) Unit continued to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable residents of Burlington County. The program requires that we investigate complaint of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable seniors and disabled adults over the age of eighteen. In 2013, we continued to see the need and demand for the program as the unit received 290 complaints. During the year, we investigated 208 new cases and actively advocated for 87 individuals who did not meet APS criteria through referrals to mental health agencies, Providence House, home care organizations, legal services, Meals on Wheels, NJ Ease, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and SCIP (Screening Crisis Intervention Program). In conjunction with our agency's legal staff, twenty (20) cases were processed for guardianship, as we investigated an alarming number of complaints of financial exploitation during 2013, which can be attributed to the continuing economic problems facing many in our community. Guardianship cases often prove to be extremely complex, time consuming and very often involve resistive efforts by family and third parties. This proved to be especially true in 2013, with a significant number of cases involving parties with competing and conflicting financial interest. At all times, staff are required to exert extraordinary effort, both legally and socially to ensure an optimum outcome of protection while maintaining respect for the incapacitated individual for whom we are petitioning court intervention. APS also has the authority to process and petition for protective court orders, which are usually done within hours of the vulnerable adult experiencing their emergency.

While 2013 saw an increase number of APS cases involving financial exploitation, self-neglect continues to comprise the largest segment of APS cases. One particular case evolved due to the concern of a Family Court Judge for a grandmother in her mid-80's having to care for her three (3) grandsons, ages 11, 14 and 15. The teenagers were under DCPD (DYFS) supervision, and it seemed to the Judge that the woman was overwhelmed. The judge asked for APS staff to assess the grandmother's capacity to manage her household while caring for her own needs. Our involvement allowed the woman to secure necessary help, which allowed her to remain in the community and still care for her three (3) grandsons.

In another case involving an elderly couple living in a motel, the wife petitioned for guardianship of her husband. The court-appointed temporary guardian requested the Judge have the wife's capacity assessed prior to guardianship being assigned to the wife. The APS social worker found the woman to still have the capacity to make decisions and provide her husband with basic care, but helped the wife receive home care.

We continued our work in building strong relationships in the community and maintaining our representation on the Long Term Care Committee, the DDD Coordination Committee, as well as bi-monthly

state coordination meeting. APS continued its outreach and public awareness campaign by conducting in-service training to community organizations and agencies which included the Office on Aging, Screening Crisis Intervention Program, Providence House and hospice organizations.

Located within the APS Unit is the **Rooming and Boarding Home Program**. Under the Rooming and Boarding Home Program we are required to maintain ongoing monitoring and outreach to NJ licensed board and care homes and their residents located within the county. During 2013, we outreached and provided services to seventeen facilities (14 rooming houses and 3 RHCF's) with a capacity of 277 beds. Of those, 111 beds, were for those aged 60 or above. Working with our county residential health care facilities, boarding homes and rooming homes affords tangible, low cost housing alternatives for not only our customers in need of housing, but to all of the county's low income, mentally ill, physically disabled and/or elderly residents.

### ***Adult Services***

2013 saw a continued demand for case-management in the Medicaid Waiver Programs, Global Options, and New Jersey Ease, and JACC, programs under our partnership with the Office on Aging. Through diligent and responsive social case management of these cases, these programs continued to afford seniors and disabled recipients the opportunity to remain in their homes and in the community. During the year, we provided case management for 270 cases per month. Services afforded to the customers ranged from home delivered meals, home health aide services, and medical day care, to the arranging of medical supplies. The success of these programs can be measured in the recognition that less than 2% of these cases resulted in the recipient being required to enter into nursing home facility.

Global Options (GO), introduced in 2006 as a universal program to replace other Medicaid waiver programs, steadily replaced CCPED, CAP and Assisted Living. GO was designed to be the first step in rebalancing spending for long term care services by providing a more equitable distribution of public funding between cost effective home and community based services and institutional based care. GO provides a broad array of supportive services to enable nursing facility residents who are clinically and financially approved for long term care through Medicaid to return and remain in the community. Working with representatives of the nursing home, the State's Community Choice Counselor from the Office of Community Care Options, and family members a care plan is developed which allows for the customers return to the community. Our social work staff then works with the customer and their family to ensure that the necessary supports programs and services are in place to ensure a successful transition from the nursing home back to the community. In addition to weekly or monthly contacts and quarterly home visits, our social workers arrange for medical equipment, supplies, Respite Care, environmental accessibility adaptations such as ramps, stair glides, bathroom modifications and remodeling, coordination with pharmacies for medication, and arrangement for higher level of care placements if indicated. Along for arranging for these services, the social worker is responsible for monitoring the cost of all services that are in place. It is the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services plan under the Medicaid Waiver to mover the responsibility of these case management services under the responsibility of the HMO service providers.

The case managers also managed a number of SSI and GA unemployable adults in the community. We work closely with these clients to assist them in applying for permanent benefits through Social Security, including health care coverage through Medicaid, and with referrals to the SSI and Community Health Law Project. Service plans include application for and participation in mental health and/or the Substance Abuse Initiative Program. We also work with them to ensure follow up medical assessments and ongoing treatment. We also assist them in securing permanent rentals, and provide services to help maintain them in the community.

***Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP)***

Burlington County’s HPRP was re-established effective July 2012 in partnership with the County and the United Way. The goal of the program is to assist financially eligible county families with rental/mortgage and housing related needs to prevent homelessness. The program was previously funded through HUD under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Services provided to the participant are divided into two categories of primary and support services and are determined on an individual basis.

Participation in the program is limited to those participants who document that they met the income guidelines of being at or below 250% of the poverty level for the family size. They must also demonstrate they had consistent employment for the previous twelve months and are currently employed, or recently layoff and are or are waiting to collect unemployment benefits or temporary disability. They must be able to provide third party documentation of their housing crisis, which was the result of a circumstance beyond their control, and document an ability to maintain housing once HPRP assistance ends.

The HPRP Program statistics are:

- 439 Total Inquiries
- 305 Pre-screened, but not offered an application
- 100 scheduled appointments
- 36 No-shows
- 39 Approved
- 23 Denied

***Work First New Jersey (WFNJ)***

Although New Jersey faced another year of slow economic recovery in 2013 we saw a small decline in the recipient roles. A large percentage was due to the implementation of the 28-day GA pre-grant protocol requiring a four week period of job search in conjunction with the Department of Labor. A large percentage of applicants do not complete this prerequisite and are therefore denied benefits. Unemployment rates were static, continuing to impose great challenges for re-employment of lesser-skilled and under-educated populations. There were no changes to the work requirements in New Jersey under TANF Reauthorization. The Federal SNAP program continued to waive the ABAWD requirements. The Federal participation rate objective, for the TANF population, remained at 50%. New Jersey’s 21 county average annual state participation rate was 21.77%, a 2% increase over the year 2012. Burlington County managed to maintain an annual participation rate of 24.36%, a 1.75% increase from 2012. A significant number of our individual case managers have had individual case load participation rates regularly ranking in the 40<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentiles with two months where an individual rate actually met or exceeded 60%.

Case Management continues to be the responsibility of the Board of Social Services in Burlington County as opposed to the One Stop Career Center - Division of Workforce Development in the majority of the other twenty counties. The Board’s WFNJ Case Management Unit continues to work closely with our One Stop partners to serve and accommodate our customers’ employment, training, educational and support-related needs. Our One Stop partners include the Division of Workforce Development, Mid-Atlantic States Career and Education Center/Workplus, America Works, Innovative Staffing, Burlington County College, the Workforce

Investment Board, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Catholic Charities/SAIF and Burlington County Community Action.

The primary vendors who provide community work experience, basic job skills, and job search activities claim to have placed a total of 200 customers into employment in 2013. The breakdown by program and vendor is below.

Mid-Atlantic States Career & Education Center

74 - TANF

27 - GA

America Works

44 - TANF

19 - GA

Innovative Staffing

30 - TANF

6 - GA

The WFNJ case management staff evaluated 1,218 TANF, GA and SNAP recipients during 2013. More than 10,081 individuals were seen throughout the year for case-related issues. Twenty-five participants took advantage of paid educational training opportunities which included Dental Assistant with Radiology, Medical Office w/Billing, Coding & E.H.R., Computer Office Medical Assistant, Certified Nurse's Assistant/Home Health Aide with Advanced Clinical Skills, A+ Network and MCP Combo, Advanced Tractor Trailer/Bus CDL-A/CDL-B and Massage Therapy. Numerous other customers were supported in E.S.L., High School Diploma, basic education and G.E.D. preparedness classes, while a number of other customers self-enrolled in colleges and technical institutions of higher education and were assisted with supports for transportation and child care while attending classroom training.

**Pay Check Plus** continued under TANF reauthorization. This initiative allows employed customers a transitional period on partial cash assistance for up to 7 months after gaining full or part time employment by disregarding 75% of their gross monthly earnings. Customers who continued to receive partial TANF assistance of less than \$200.00 per month continued to have the option to close their TANF case in order to take advantage of the **Supplemental Work Support Program**. This program encourages employment with a \$200.00 monthly work support supplement for up to 24 months post T.A.N.F. Twenty two individuals opted to terminate their partial assistance in order to take advantage of this program in 2013. Seventeen individuals recertified eligibility and continue to receive the benefits for the second year of eligibility. Fourteen individuals received the full second year of benefits and were closed out during 2013.

The **TANF Initiative for Parents {T.I.P.}**, a mentoring, parenting and healthy families initiative for expectant parents and/or parents with infants under 12 months of age served 33 TANF families and one GA pregnant adult in 2013. This program also continues to engage emergency assistance families as a requirement of the Individual Service Plan. Twenty-two families were engaged in TIP activities under EA during 2013. The program continues to be administered by the Burlington County Community Action Program.

The **Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Initiatives** continue to provide drug and alcohol rehabilitative and mental health services to the TANF and GA populations. WFNJ referred 194 clients to the

program during 2013. Of those referred, 167 appeared for treatment assessment and 39 TANF and 128 GA clients began some form of treatment, either out-patient or residential. The minimal availability of treatment facilities within Burlington County continued to pose barriers to the accessibility for rehabilitative treatment for this needed service within the county region. Post House did become available in 2011 as part of our county's treatment provider network. Post House is the only in-county provider to offer intensive in-patient treatment, thus many placements continue to be made out of county due to the lack of beds. The Lester Drenk Guidance Center, Twin Oaks/Family Services and Solstice Counseling are serving many of the individuals who require mental health as well as intensive out-patient rehabilitative treatment. Individuals who require methadone maintenance are able to seek treatment from SODAT in Mt Holly or Camden Treatment Associates in Camden.

The **Supportive Assistance to Individuals and Families program {S.A.I.F.}** continued to receive referrals for client case monitoring for both TANF and GA long-term recipients who have reached 48 months on the public assistance roles. The goal of the SAIF program is intensive case management to ensure client self-sufficiency, or having the disabled move onto the Supplemental Security roles before reaching the 60 month Lifetime Limit for cash assistance benefits. Intensive Case management services continue to be administered by Catholic Charities of Camden County. During the year 2013, a total of 14 TANF and 44 GA customers were referred for intensive case management services.

Also during 2013, 47 GA individuals surpassed 48 months on cash assistance and were exempted from the Lifetime Limit. Currently there are 52 additional customers, receiving GA cash assistance, who have surpassed the 60-month limit and have qualified for Lifetime Limit exemption status. Individuals who receive exemption status and remain cash eligible must meet the following criteria: long term permanent disability, sole caretaker of an ill /disabled relative, age over 60 years and chronically unemployable/low literacy categories.

During the course of 2013 approximately 42 individuals were awarded SSI benefits who had been given Lifetime Limit Exemption status based upon long term disability. Many of those individuals sought and received legal assistance through the SSI Legal Services Project.

The **Supplemental Living Support** Fund, which allowed a supplement of \$150.00 monthly for individuals who were exempted from the 60 month Lifetime Limit, was suspended under the new state budget beginning July 1, 2011 and has not been restored.

The **Career Advancement Program**, which is available to Post-TANF employed individuals in pursuit of higher education, assisted two customers in 2013. The funds were disbursed to assist individuals who were pursuing degrees in Accounting and Adult English education.

**Special Initiative** funds were discontinued in July 2010 and have not been restored to the Post- TANF programs to date.

**Post-TANF childcare** services assisted an average of 134 families monthly during 2013. The WFNJ Case Management unit works in conjunction with Burlington County Community Action in order to provide these services during a 24 month Post-TANF period for our employed population. BCCAP continues to be the lead child care affiliate for all WFNJ resource/referral and participant child care needs.

## **Youth Opportunity Program**

The mission of the Youth Opportunity Program (YOP) is to provide youth between the ages of 14-21 with the necessary skills to become prepared for both academic and employment success. Since its inception in 2000, the program has had 1835 referrals, of which 1247 participants were enrolled. YOP participants are referred from all walks of life: Family Services, DYFS, Capable Adolescent Mothers, Crossroad Program, County High School, Justice System and the General Public.

YOP currently has 85 active participants, and 35 youth receiving follow up services. This totals 120 youth eligible for services.

The summer of 2013 ten youth participants were employed throughout the county. This includes municipal offices and non-profit organizations such as BCBSS, County Court House, BCCAP, Burlington County Department of Finance/Purchasing Department, Burlington County Corrections, BCSSS, in several municipalities and Information Technology/Print Shop. The youth worked 30 hours per week for a maximum of 8 weeks earning \$9.00 hourly.

### **YOP offered workshops through Resources for Independent Living, YMCA of Camden and Burlington County, and Henkels & McCoy:**

- Housing and Community Living (3 wks)
- Leadership and Citizenship Training (3 wks)
- Hygiene and Health (5 wks)
- Laundry and Cleaning Skills Training (4 wks)
- Banking and Budgeting (6 wks)
- Cooking and Kitchen Safety (4 wks)
- Employment and Study Skills Training (7 wks)

### **Mid –Atlantic States Career and Education Center**

- Tutoring and GED Preparation
- Job Skill Development
- Service Learning-Community Service
- Job Placement and Connection to Education
- Mentoring
- Rutgers Expressive Arts
- Nutrition Education
- Financial Management
- Transportation (bus passes provided)

### **Rutgers University T.E.E.M. Gateway:**

Bi-weekly Workshops, one will become motivated by cool learning opportunities and hands-on experiences. The program offers the opportunity for training, career exploration and improving yourself.

- Help with Life Skills
- Explore Job Opportunities  
(Paid and unpaid internship)
- Hands-on Experiences
- Learn about your Environment
- Learn How to Earn and Save Money

**Community Service Projects:**

- Volunteer work at Nursing Homes
- Worked in Soup Kitchens
- Assisted in Community Centers

**Other Services Provided Case Management:**

- Mentoring
- One on One Job coaching
- Resume Assistance
- FAFSA
- Job Shadow Day
- One year follow up service after case closes

YOP works closely with our youth participants to determine their needs and provide the necessary services to keep them in school or employed. Support services may consist but are not limited to the purchase of books and tools for school, tuition assistance for training, transportation (NJ Transit pass or Burlink pass), clothing allowance, and child care.

## Overview

Since the end of 2008, the Burlington County Board of Social Services has struggled with an overwhelming demand for help from residents of the County, while also faced the continual loss of experienced staff. During the five year time period between the end of 2008 and the end of 2013, there has been a 30% increase in the NJ SNAP (Food Stamp) program, a 83% decrease in TANF, and 50% increase in the Medicaid/Family Care program. At the onset of the economic downturn, we responded to the avalanche of people seeking help by re-allocating staff from support areas and judiciously using overtime. These measures enabled us to process applications within thirty days, with a limited number of applications being processed within forty-five days. However, as the number of applications continued to increase beyond all levels previously experienced during recessions and we began to lose staff, we began to fall behind. To cope with this deteriorating situation, the agency modified procedures and processes to maximize our ability to serve those in desperate need.

Unfortunately, by the end of 2010, even these measures proved inadequate to handle the skyrocketing number of Burlington County residents seeking relief. Therefore, during the fall of 2011, we met with staff and agency administrators and developed a conscientious plan to reorganize the agency with the object of improving efficiencies and customer service. This first step of the reorganization plan was implemented January 3, 2012 with full implementation October 2012.

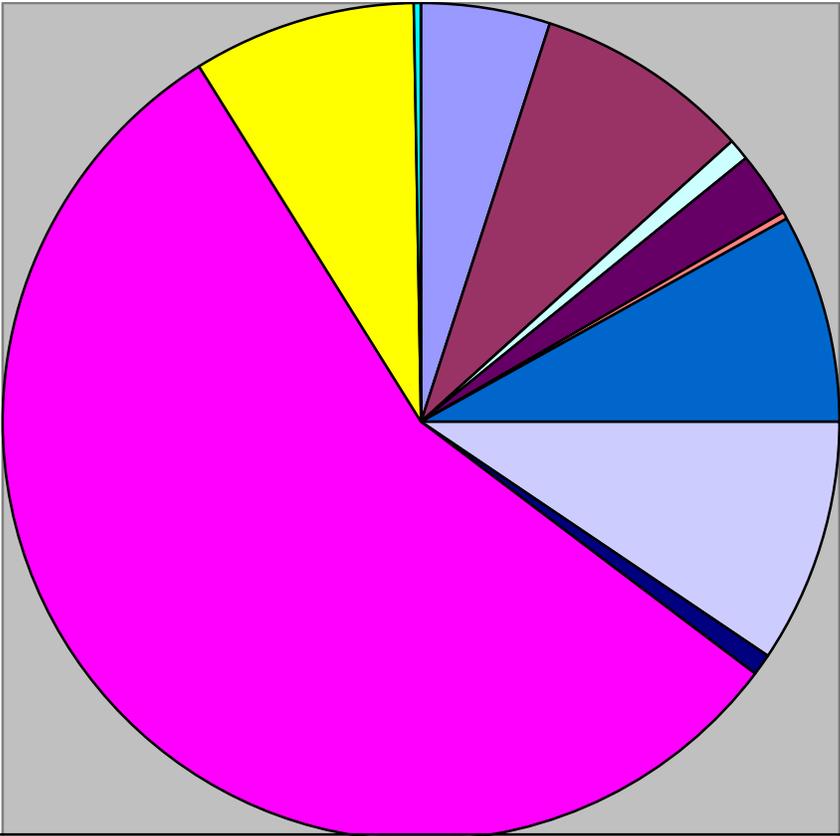
We have completely revamped our case banking process with help from the State, which will be implemented in July, 2014.

While we continue our struggles to assist those County residents who are in need, the overall success of the agency in helping our customers to achieve not only short term immediate help but long-term lasting financial and social success as well cannot be measured only by how much we issue in benefits or by looking at our agency's positive effect on the County's economy:

GA Grants	\$ 3,075,443
GA EA Vendor Payments	\$ 5,222,034
GA WFNJ to Work Benefits	\$ 3,259
SSI Burials	\$ 403,121
SSI EA Vendor Payments	\$ 1,603,220
CSP Disregard	\$ 182,414
TANF Benefits	\$ 4,967,912
TANF EA Benefits to Vendors	\$ 5,809,576
TANF WFNJ to Work Benefits	\$ 441,498
Food Stamp Benefits	\$ 34,493,921
Section 8 Rent Payments	\$ 5,329,401
Legal-Property and Resources	<u>\$ 132,425</u>
Total	\$ 61,664,225

Rather we must look at our customers who do succeed. Be it the youth who avails themselves to the opportunities to not only succeed in their educational pursuits and thus is accepted to medical school or the elderly 82 year widow who had just lost her husband who was a veteran seeking help meeting the high cost with food and energy and is found eligible for NJ SNAP and Energy Assistance, to the disabled mother on SSI who

has historically struggled to provide secure housing for her family who becomes delinquent in her rent and utilities whose severely autistic son who has just been found eligible for SSI who through help under the EA program is able to pay their overdue bill and is able to retain their permanent housing through agency action to have them enrolled in the County’s Billpayer Program for the elderly and disabled, and while the number of our families and individuals who successfully achieved economic self-sufficiency have decreased since the start of the recession we have able to help stabilize many of the county’s resident’s economic and social crisis and begin them on the path of self sufficiency.



<span style="color: #6666ff;">■</span> GA Grants	<span style="color: #800040;">■</span> GA/EA Vendor
<span style="color: #ffff00;">■</span> GA/WFNJ Work Ben.	<span style="color: #add8e6;">■</span> SSI Burials
<span style="color: #4b0082;">■</span> SSI/EA Vendor	<span style="color: #e9967a;">■</span> CSP Dis.
<span style="color: #0000ff;">■</span> TANF Ben.	<span style="color: #add8e6;">■</span> TANF/EA Vendor
<span style="color: #000080;">■</span> TANF/WFNJ Work Ben.	<span style="color: #ff00ff;">■</span> FS Benefit
<span style="color: #ffff00;">■</span> Section 8 Rent Pymts	<span style="color: #00ffff;">■</span> Legal-Property & Resources