



City of Virginia Beach

Social Services Advisory Board

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Annual Report to City Council

Appointive Agency Chair: Helena Gourdine - Thorpe

Date: August 31, 2025

Executive Summary

During the **Fiscal Year** covering the period of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 the Social Services Advisory Board (SSAB) volunteers and liaisons met ten (10) times.

- Board members participated in a joint meeting Retreat with the CSB in March that focused on team building and a review of the organization's Strategic Plan.
- Board members reviewed social services financial reports during each full board meeting.
- Board members participated in an Elder Abuse Awareness Walk on Friday, June 13th at Mount Trashmore.
- Educational sessions were conducted to promote ongoing awareness of key programs and initiatives:

September 6, 2024, Conflicts of Interest & FOIA

October 4, 2024, CQI Strategic Plan

November 1, 2024, Employment Services/ Daycare

January 10, 2025, Data and Statistics

February 7, 2025, Bank On

March 10, 2025, Joint CSB SSAB Meeting

April 4, 2025, Police Collaboration with CPS

May 2, 2025, Fraud Updates

June 6, 2025, Retreat

June 6, 2025, Retreat

Our most significant accomplishments are detailed below, along with recommendations for your consideration.

Mission Statement

The Social Services Advisory Board (SSAB) was established by the Virginia Beach City Council in 1978 as mandated in the Code of Virginia. The Board is composed of citizens appointed by the Virginia Beach City Council, and its members are responsible for ensuring that throughout Virginia Beach, eligible individuals receive social services, financial assistance, and other benefits.

Accomplishment of Goals and Objectives

Over the past **Fiscal Year 2024-2025** the Social Services Advisory Board (SSAB), through its appointed volunteers and its liaisons, worked on the following key matters in furtherance of its mission:

1. Reviewed service delivery data for several programs to promote timely benefits, and referrals for family and children services.
2. Received monthly updates on budgets, staffing, new and changing policy and procedures.
3. Reviewed monthly revenue, expenditures, and the overall DHS budget.
4. Monitored the progress of the social services goals in the organization's 2024-2026 Strategic Plan.
5. Created updated Board handbooks for new and existing staff members.
6. Welcomed two (2) new board members.
7. Convened a Nominating Committee to create a slate of nominees for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair for the coming year.
8. Received program updates on the unwinding of Medicaid and related data.
9. Board Member Robin Foreman-Wheeler completed her terms of service June 2025.

Membership and Attendance

FY2025 SSAB Members & Liaisons	
Board Members	Liaison
Helena Gourdine-Thorpe, Chair	Aileen L. Smith; DHS Director
David Bradley, Vice Chair	Charlene Collins; DHS Deputy Director
Robin Foreman-Wheeler	Cynthia Buckler, Recorder
Ra Hee Jeon	Adrea Dyke, Recorder
John Moxen	City Leadership

FY2025 SSAB Members & Liaisons	
Joann Mancuso	Dr. Kenneth Chandler; Deputy City Manager
Vivian Blaize	Chris Haws
Whitney King	Yolanda Clark
	Dayna Bandy
	Elizabeth Batista-Boone
	Wendy Swallow
	Fay Ward
	Sherrell Porter
	Al Steward Jr.
	City Council Members
	Michael Berlucchi; City Council Liaison

SSAB Attendance Report

- Calendar Year 2024 (see attached)
- Calendar Year 2025 (see attached)

**City of Virginia Beach
Social Services Advisory Board (SSAB)
2024 Attendance Record**

Members Attendance

Name	Term Expires on:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug Spec Meet	Sep 26 th	Oct 31 st	Nov 28 th	Dec 12 th	Total Present
Helena Gourdine - Thorpe	06/30 /2028							N/A	P	P	P	P	N/A	4/4
David Bradley	06/30 /2026							N/A	P	P/V	P	P	N/A	4/4
Joann Mancuso	06/30 /2026							N/A	E	P	P	A	N/A	2/4
Robin Foreman - Wheeler	06/30 /2025							N/A	E	P	P	P	N/A	3 /4
John Moxen	06/30 /2026							N/A	E	E	E	E	N/A	0/4
Vivian Blaize	02/28 /2027							N/A	E	P	P	P	N/A	3 /4
Ra Hee Jeon	02/28 /2027							N/A	P	P	P	A	N/A	3/4
Whitney King	06/30 /2026							N/A	E	P	P	P	N/A	3 /4

Name	Term Expires on:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug Spec Meet	Sep 26 th	Oct 31 st	Nov 28 th	Dec 12 th	Total Present
Susan Miley-Petrehn	06/30/2026							N/A	E	A	P	E	N/A	1 / 4
Quorum; total number of members in person/total number of appointed members								N/A	3/9	7/9	8/9	5/9	N/A	

Key: Present (P) Present/Virtually (P/V) Absent (A) Resigned (R) Excused Absence (E) Canceled (C)

City Council Liaisons/Department Staff Liaisons

Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug Spec Meet	Sep 26 th	Oct 31 st	Nov 28 th	Dec 12 th	Total Present
Michael Berlucchi, City Council Liaison							N/A					N/A	N/A
Aileen L. Smith, Director, DHS							N/A		P	E	P	N/A	2/4
Charlene Collins, Deputy Director, DSS							N/A		P	P	P	N/A	3/4

Key: Present (P) Present/Virtually (P/V)

City of Virginia Beach
Social Services Advisory Board (SSAB)
2025 Attendance Record

Name	Term Expires on:	Jan 10 th	Feb 7 th	Mar 10 th	Apr 4 th	May 2nd	Jun 6 th	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total Present
Helena Gourdine - Thorpe	06/30/2028	P	P	P	A	P	P	N/A					N/A	5/6
David Bradley	06/30/2026	E	P	P	P	P	P	N/A					N/A	5/6
Joann Mancuso	06/30/2026	P	P	P	P	E	P	N/A					N/A	5/6
Robin Foreman - Wheeler	06/30/2025	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A					N/A	6/6
John Moxen	06/30/2026	E	P/V	P	P	P	P	N/A					N/A	5/6
Vivian Blaize	02/28/2027	P	A	A	P	P	A	N/A					N/A	3/6
Ra Hee Jeon	02/28/2027	P	A	A	P	P	P	N/A					N/A	4/6
Whitney King	06/30/2026	A	P	P	P	P	P	N/A					N/A	5/6

Name	Term Expires on:	Jan 10 th	Feb 7 th	Mar 10 th	Apr 4 th	May 2nd	Jun 6 th	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total Present
Susan Miley-Petrehn	06/30/2026	A	A	A	A			N/A					N/A	0/6
Quorum; total number of members in person/total number of appointed members		5/9	6/9	6/9	7/9	7/9	7/9	N/A						

Key: Present (P) Present/Virtually (P/V) Absent (A) Resigned (R) Excused Absence (E) Canceled (C)

City Council Liaisons/Department Staff Liaisons

Name	Jan 10	Feb 7	Mar 10	Apr 4	May 2	June 6	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Michael Berlucchi, City Council Liaison							N/A						N/A
Aileen L. Smith, Director, DHS	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A						6/6
Charlene Collins, Deputy Director, DSS	P	P	P	P	P	P	N/A						6/6

Key: Present (P) Present/Virtually (P/V)

Attendance Report

FY 2024-2025 SSAB Volunteer Hours Report

Board Member	Services Dates	Merit Hours
Vivian Blaize	09-06-2024 10-04-2024 11-01-2024 01-10-2025 04-04-2025 05-02-2025	6.97
David Bradley	08-19-2024 09-06-2024 10-04-2024 11-01-2024 02-07-2025 03-10-2025 04-04-2025 05-02-2025 06-06-2025	10.73
Robin Foreman-Wheeler	09-06-2024 10-04-2024 11-01-2024 01-10-2025 02-07-2025 03-10-2025 04-04-2025 05-02-2025 06-06-2025	11.22
Helena Gourdine-Thorpe	08-19-2024 09-06-2024 10-04-2024 11-01-2024 01-10-2025 02-07-2025 03-10-2025 05-02-2025 06-06-2025	10.72
Ra Hee Jeon	08-19-2024 09-06-2024 10-04-2024 11-01-2024 01-10-2025 04-04-2025	9.97

Board Member	Services Dates	Merit Hours
	05-02-2025	
	06-06-2025	
Joann Mancuso	09-06-2024	9.17
	10-04-2024	
	01-10-2025	
	02-07-2025	
	03-10-2025	
	04-04-2025	
	06-06-2025	
John Moxen	02-07-2025	7
	03-10-2025	
	04-04-2025	
	05-02-2025	
	06-06-2025	
Whitney King	09-06-2024	10.22
	10-04-2024	
	11-01-2024	
	02-07-2025	
	03-10-2025	
	04-04-2025	
	05-02-2025	
	06-06-2025	
		1.02
Susan Petrehn	10-04-2024	
Total		66.27

Financial Report (if applicable)

N/A

Goals and Objectives for the Coming Year

- Increase stakeholder engagement to identify additional mechanisms and pathways that will provide enhanced communication and a broader knowledge of various resources available to the citizens.
- Assist in enhancing stakeholder partnerships and increase community awareness of social services resources.

- Engage the community in strategies to improve services for low-income and vulnerable citizens to increase the safety and well-being of our youth, disabled, and senior citizens.
- Enhance participation by Board members in community-engaging endeavors.

Recommendations to City Council

- Expansion of technology use in Human Services programs by supporting the use of the document imaging system (DOMA) for Social Services Programs to convert paper documents to electronic in all areas of Human Services.
- Replacement of the financial system Harmony that is used for payments to our vendors. The new system will take the Children's Service Act from paper to electronic case files.

Closing

The Chair and staff liaison worked together to draft the report, and the board approved it on 08/11/25. Should you have any questions or desire a formal City Council briefing from our agency, please contact Helena Gourdine-Thorpe, DHS SSAB Chair at lenagt@cox.net or staff liaison, Adrea Dyke at adyke@vbgov.com.