

## 2017-2018 – N.C. General Assembly Social Services Consortium Legislative Priorities

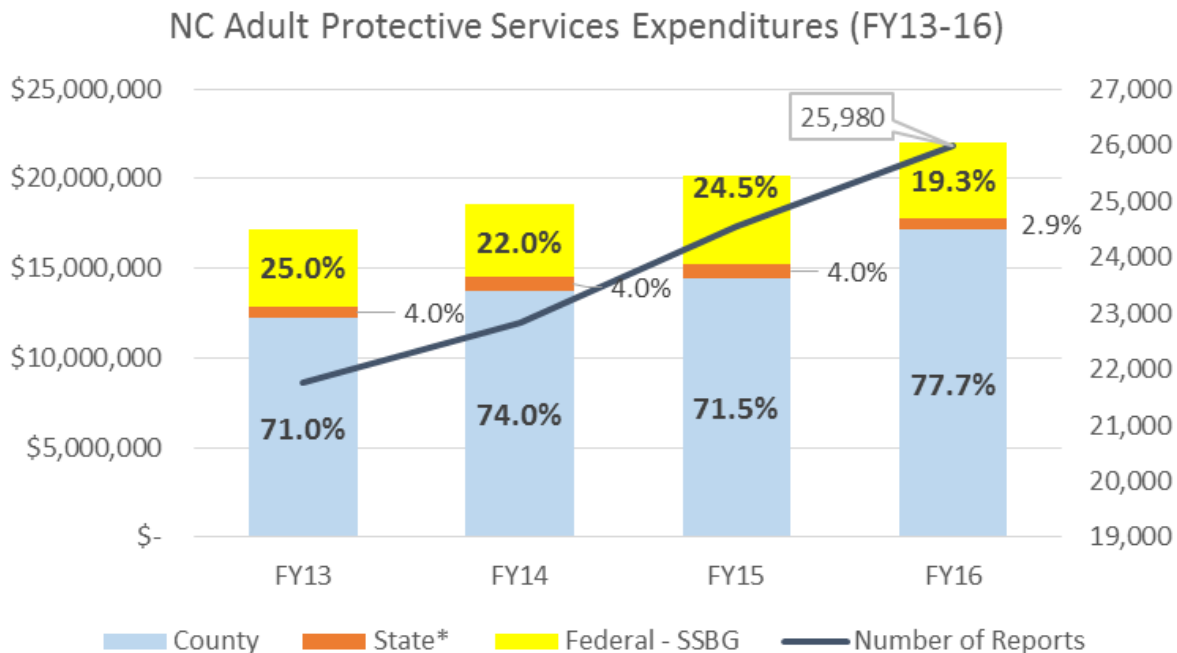
### 1. Increase funding and enhance services for Adult Protective Services and Guardianship while also improving Behavioral Health Services for vulnerable, older and disabled adults.

In SFY 2016, \$22M was expended on Adult Protective Services and of that amount, 3% were state funds, 77% county and 19% federal. The number of Adult Protective Services cases continues to rise and state funds remain stagnant. **See graph below.** Additional funding is needed for Adult Protective Services to improve outcomes for this vulnerable population. **Seek recurring appropriation \$7,000,000** to be allocated to county departments of social services for Adult Protective Services.

In SFY 2016, \$15.9M was expended on Public Guardianship in SFY 2015 and of that amount, 5% were state funds, 66% county and 29% federal. There has been a 50% increase in guardianship cases in the last eight years. State funding to support mandated services to support Public Guardianship has been very limited which means counties have to fund this mandate services when the limited federal block grant funds are exhausted. **See graph below.** **Seek recurring appropriation of \$5,000,000** to be allocated to county departments of social services for Public Guardianship which will aid Counties in improving outcomes for this vulnerable population. Increased funding for Guardianship has been recommended by the AD Hoc Work Group established by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

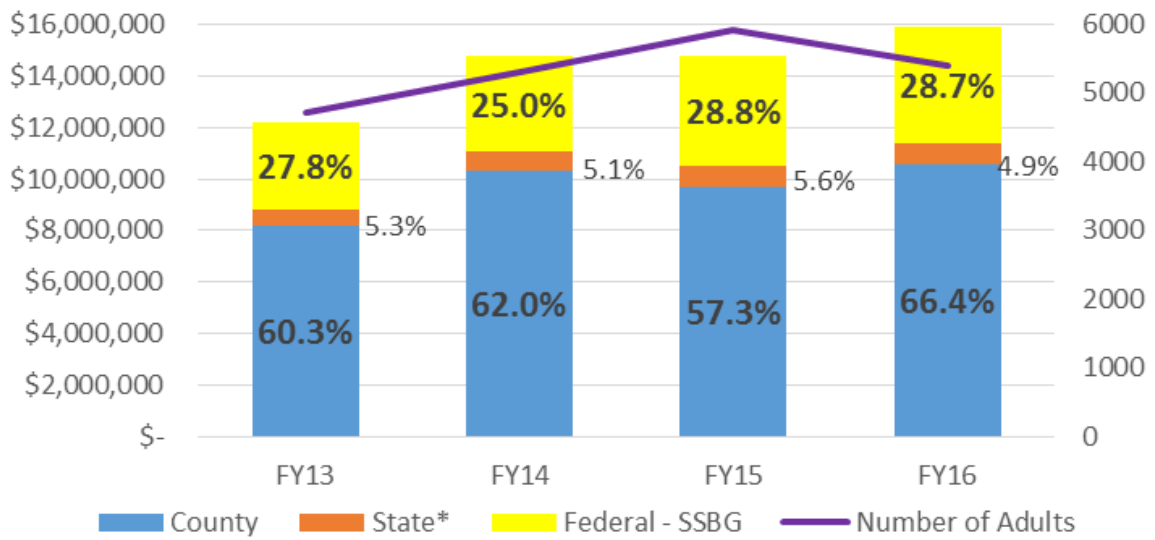
Because of the growing APS and Guardianship cases in North Carolina, NCACDSS would recommend that the General Assembly commission a comprehensive evaluation of Adult Protective Services and Guardianship Services in North Carolina by a nationally recognized organization. At a minimum, the following should be included in the evaluation; (i) Review of all related general statutes to determine if changes are need to the Adult Protective Services and Guardianship statutes, (ii) develop a statewide practice framework in conjunction with NC FAST Adult Services to achieve the vision of an integrated, secure and robust data collection and case management system that meets Federal & State standards to be implemented statewide, (iii) develop clear and measurable plan with performance expectations driven by outcomes with a new continuous quality improvement (CQI) system that is adaptive at both the state and county level, (iv) provide an assessment of the judicial process to determine if there are barriers and recommendations on how to address the barriers, (v) provide an in-depth assessment of the current funding structure and

determine the level of funding that is needed to sustain the level of services the citizen of this State deserve and (vi) provide an assessment of the current levels mental health services available to adults involved in Adult Protective & Guardianship Services cases to determine what resources are needed to ensure there are adequate services available. The General Assembly should appropriate \$700,000 to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to contract for this independent evaluation. DHHS and County Departments of Social Services shall work together on the development of the request for proposal for the evaluator and jointly review the proposal and select the evaluator. A status report should be provided no later than April 1, 2018 to the Joint Legislative Committee on Health and Human Services and the Fiscal Research Division and a final report no later than January 31, 2019.



\*Required Match for Native American Counties  
 Data Source: 2015-2016 Annual APS Survey

### NC Public Guardianship Expenditures (FY13-16)

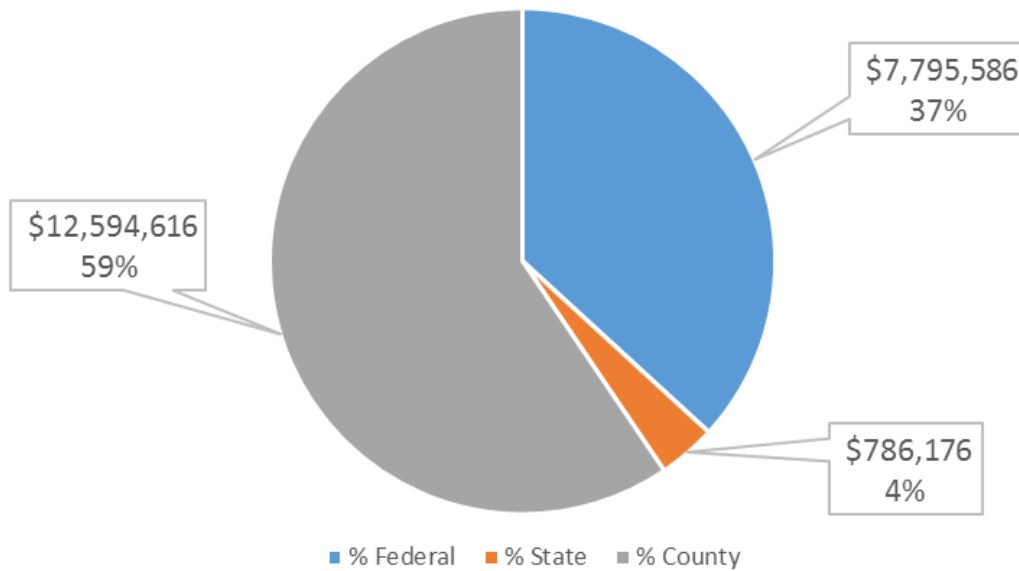


\*Required Match for Native American Counties

Data Source: DAAS Planning, Budget and System Support

Amount of county funding sources are likely understated, as multiple counties do not report guardianship contract amounts to the state due to inability for reimbursement. See detail in next graph.

### FY16 NC Public Guardianship Spending



This reporting from the 2015-2016 Guardianship Survey (responses by 94 counties) includes contracts totaling \$3,220,308 of SSBG funding to serve 1,465 DAAS wards and \$2,026,658 of county funding to serve 775 county wards in addition to the 4,645 wards reported to the state and included in multi-year graph above.

## **2. Appropriate recurring funds to support the State's Child Welfare Program Improvement Plan.**

Last budget cycle, the General Assembly heard about the needs of the Child Welfare System through the results of the Federal Child and Family Services Review as well as the Child Protective Services evaluation directed by the General Assembly itself. The Department of Health and Human Services put forth an expansion request to address some of the most pressing needs based specifically on the requirements of 2 year Program Improvement Plan. These particular items were put forth in part because of the effort and time needed to implement these strategies.

Unfortunately, the action taken last session in appropriating non-recurring funding to support the Department's Child Welfare request is problematic. Much of the funding appropriated is needed to initiate contracts supporting in-home services for families and staff training. In order to effectively implement these strategies, contracts must be awarded and staff must be hired and trained to carry out their assigned responsibilities. These processes, unfortunately, even with staff working at 110%, take a significant amount of time to accomplish. At best, it will take 6 to 9 months to get contracts in place and on-board staff. With non-recurring funding, there is a reluctance to initiate this process, in fear that the funding will not be continued. For those that are willing to engage in the work, they are required to hire staff into time limited roles. This limits the applicant pool significantly. Many individuals and perhaps those most qualified will not apply for fear these positions will not be funded during the next cycle.

We all want to improve the quality of our child welfare system and with that come a commitment to adequately fund the system. This includes hiring well qualified staff, supporting staff with adequate training and enhancing our services to families who are struggling with responsibility of raising their children.

## **3. Preserve Federal and State Block Grants for county administered programs (TANF, SSBG, CSBG, HCCBG), oppose unfunded mandates, and prevent unnecessary workload increases to counties (including shifting state responsibilities to counties).**

Federal DHHS Block Grants should be used support the programs and services for which the grants were originally established. NCACDSS supports a plan that prioritizes and ensures existing federal funds block grant funds are used for mandated services: work first, child protection, adult protection and guardianship and other community services for older adults, such as meals on wheels, adult day care and health.