

# COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

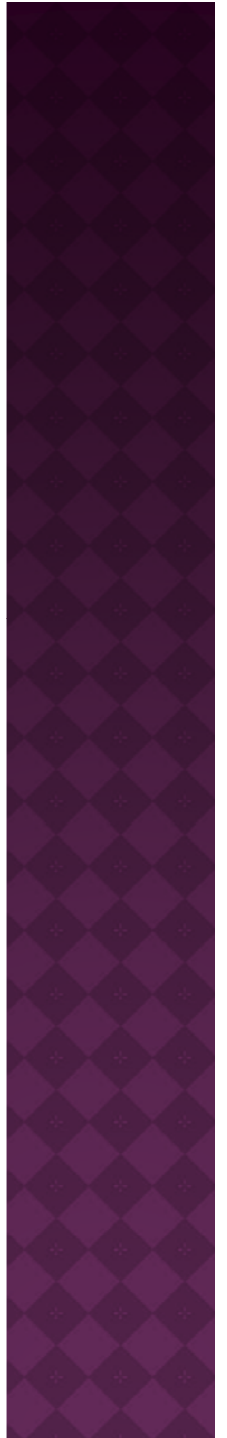
Funding and client service challenges

# BACKGROUND

- ◉ The division of Community Assistance relies on considerable grant funding to support its administrative costs and provide direct services to the community.
- ◉ The division budget for FY 2010/11 is \$30 million.
- ◉ Grant funding from state and federal sources is \$20 million (67 percent) of budget.
- ◉ 87 percent of the budget is spent on direct services.

# BACKGROUND

- ◉ The current economy has had a significant impact on some residents of Volusia County during the past three years.
- ◉ Record unemployment has forced some low income and formerly middle class households to seek assistance to pay basic living expenses.



## BACKGROUND CONTINUED

- ◉ In 2008, Human Services began to review its client assistance program. The intent was to ensure that clients were not over-using the system.
- ◉ By the end of this coming fiscal year, it is projected our offices will have assisted 12,295 clients - almost double the amount served in 2008.

## BACKGROUND CONTINUED

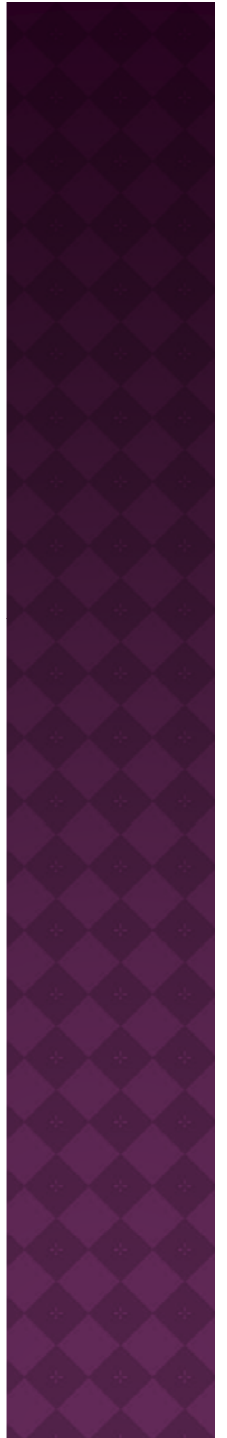
- ◉ In the last fiscal year, we began modifying our client delivery system to keep pace with the increasing requests for assistance.
- ◉ Safety of staff and clients and efficiency in processing requests were the primary issues addressed.
- ◉ We used a triage approach to reduce the wait time for clients in the lobby and the interview time for caseworkers.

# CLIENT SERVICES

- ◉ Staff was increased in 2010 by hiring temporary employees through our leasing agency using grant funds only.
- ◉ Triage system implemented:
  - Caseworker aide reviews paperwork (in the lobby) provided by client to ensure all needed documents are available.
  - Client begins intake process with an intake specialist to get demographic information into the database and calculate income for the household.
  - This reduces caseworker's time with client by 30-50 percent depending on types of assistance being requested.

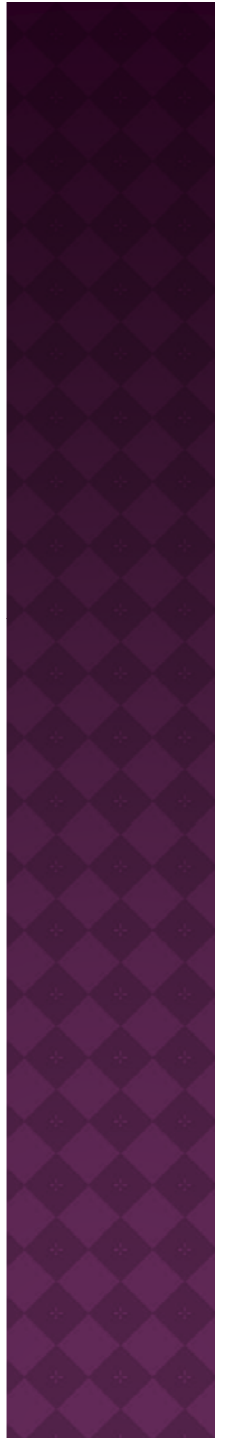
# CLIENT SERVICES

- ◉ This new delivery system has dramatically improved the caseworkers' ability to interview and assist clients and decrease the amount of lobby time a client faces.



# FUNDING CHALLENGES

- Human Services is facing two funding challenges.
  - First, is an unstable granting budget that is facing substantial cuts from the new federal budget.
  - Second, the number of clients served has risen so dramatically the amount budgeted in the general fund is not sufficient if service delivery remains at the same level.





# FUNDING CHALLENGES

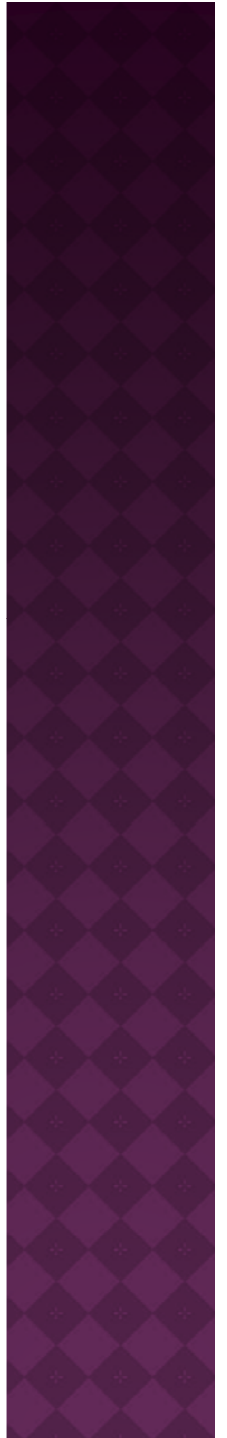
- ◉ The new federal budget has some unknown fiscal concerns for our division.
- ◉ Recent good news is that our LIHEAP grant will be awarded at \$2.4 million.
- ◉ CSBG grant funds are in danger of being cut drastically. Florida's Department of Community Affairs suggests we budget at a reduction of 50 percent of our current contract for a new grant amount of \$220,544.
- ◉ This cut will have a severe impact on service delivery and staffing.

# FUNDING CHALLENGES

- ◉ Currently, 20 permanent staff have part of their salary charged to the CSBG grant, totaling \$283,200.
- ◉ In preparing for a potential 50 percent shortfall in the CSBG budget for 2011-12, the following options are being proposed:
  - Increase administrative costs in the LIHEAP budget to the maximum allowable under the grant guidelines. (Done)

# FUNDING CHALLENGES

- Reduce the number of temporary staff in the LIHEAP budget to increase available funds to maintain permanent staff. (In progress)
- Reduce emergency assistance in CSBG to once per fiscal year. (Done)
- Reassign staff where appropriate to maximize administrative costs across all grants. (In progress)
- Increase general fund to cover loss of grant funds.



# FUNDING CHALLENGES

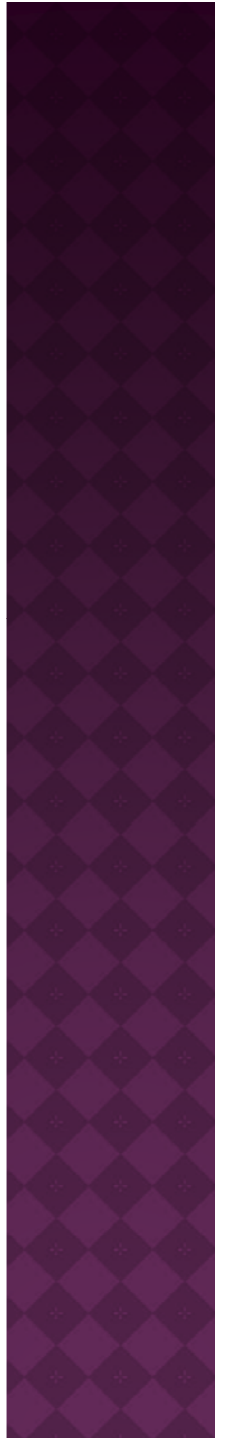
- ◉ Over the past three years, general fund expenditures for client assistance have been significantly lower than budgeted.
- ◉ After the overhaul to the client services process, the general fund expenditures dropped by over \$600,000.
- ◉ With the expenditure level remaining flat for 2008/09 and 2009/10 the amount budgeted was reduced by \$617,000 over those years to assist in meeting the general fund reduction.

# FUNDING CHALLENGES

- ◉ In the first eight months of FY 2010/11, over \$760,000 was spent on client services from the general fund. Budgeted amount is \$955,000.
- ◉ If client assistance requests remain at the current level, an additional \$210,000 would be needed to fund the remainder of this year's budget.

# FUNDING CHALLENGES

- ◉ Options to stay within current budget:
  - Reduce the poverty income level to 125 percent of federal poverty.
  - Limit the number of times clients can receive assistance to once per year.
  - Eliminate service assistance from general fund when funds are gone.
  - Fund anticipated shortfall of \$210,000



Questions/direction

