



# Annual Report 2021

Lumpkin County  
Department of Family and Children Services  
175 Tipton Dr.  
Dahlonega GA 30533

## Lumpkin County DFCS Board Annual Report

- A. The DFCS Lumpkin County Board is comprised of a 5-member board seats as outlined below:

Seat 1: Betty Fitts, Chair – Retired DFCS Director

Seat 2: LaGala Fugate – Lumpkin County School Counselor

Seat 3: Patricia Hawkins – Retired Educator

Seat 4: Brigette Barker – Lumpkin County Family Connections Director

Seat 5: Melissa Line – Community Helping Place Director

During the first two quarters of the year, board meetings were not held due to leadership changes. Board meetings resumed in August, after the new County Director came on board.

The board is currently meeting every other month. The meeting takes place in an open space to be able to socially distance and there is also the option of a virtual platform.

Board activities have been limited due to COVID-19 and the change in leadership. There was participation in the quarterly Regional Board meetings, assistance in putting together a toy run to benefit children in foster care and assistance from board members at the Christmas party.

- B. Lumpkin County has gone through staff turnover and required assistance from the Region, other counties and temporary staff (PRN) to ensure child safety. Through all of the challenges, the County has remained faithful in meeting the vision and mission of the Department of Family and Children Services by ensuring child safety and overall well-being. As to the successes, Lumpkin County DFCS has worked on building a stronger partnership with community stakeholders. The support from Family Connections, Community Helping Place and the Women's Club are just a few of the great partnerships that help support staff and families in the community. Collaborative meetings have also assisted in building partnerships to better support staff and the community.
- C. Lumpkin County is in need of a supervision center to hold visitation between children and parents. At this time, visits between parents and children take place in a public place in the community or at the DFCS office. A conducive place that is able to hold guided-supervision visits is needed.

- D. To improve operations, the Board discussed:
- a. The need to increase the yearly county budget.
  - b. The need to improve the current judicial operations. Non-emergency petitions are not being filed timely which often times lead to emergency removals from the home.
  - c. The need to build connections and stronger relationships with local colleges to improve retention.

Presented by: Chairperson Betty Fitts, Brigette Barker, LaGala Fugate, Patricia Hawkins, Melissa Line and County Director, Mariela Perez.

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X Mariela Perez

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Mariela Perez

Secretary

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X Betty Fitts

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Betty Fitts

Chairperson

Signed by: 9de2cf1c-7639-4b00-974b-30da8304e4ac