



SHELBY COUNTY GOVERNMENT DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES™

Addressing underlying conditions of wellbeing and justice, for all to reach their full potential

Community Connections

A Newsletter of the Shelby County Government's Division of Community Services

Vision Statement

The Shelby County Division of Community Services strives to be a highly organized team and partner, dedicated to promoting a strong community where all people are able to reach their full potential.

Mission Statement

The Division of Community Services promotes ongoing economic security and independence for the people of Shelby County. We do this by promoting, coordinating and delivering services that address the underlying conditions for wellbeing and justice.

New Year, Same (and Better) We

I have a confession. I am one of those people who loves new year resolutions. I love the self-reflection. I love the resolve to make positive changes. If there were a shirt that describes my attitude at the beginning of most years, it would read “New Year, New Me.”

My time as the Director of the Division of Community Services has given me a little more balance in my perspective about my resolutions. I know now that while change is great, sometimes we need to **resolve to keep the path that we forged before.** Perhaps we just need to enhance or ramp up the goals that are already in place. With that in mind, I don’t have any newly developed goals to share for our Division. Instead, I am challenging us to look at the goals set in 2018 and figuring out ways to take them to the next level in 2019.



Dorcas Young Griffin,
Director, Division of
Community Services

Goal 1: Establish an engaged, knowledgeable team able to work within their strengths.

Strategies: Strengthen leadership skills, examine our organizational structure and job descriptions to reflect need, and support ongoing training and development opportunities for all staff.

Goal 2: Seek out new and innovative opportunities for resources (funding & programs).

Strategies: Seek new grants and funding to support existing and new programming, including prevention programming and leveraging County resources to support external partner applications for funding.

Goal 3: Increase awareness of services offered through the Division to the broader community.

Strategies: Brand and market services, including updating our online presence and focused outreach to populations and areas that are disproportionately impacted.

Goal 4: Create connectivity of services throughout the Division (and partners) for greatest impact for individuals, families and community.

Strategies: Explore establishing a division wide internal case management and referral system, that utilizes a universal intake or “no wrong door” approach for clients as well as expanding access points and service times to best meet the needs of the community.

It has been exactly one year since we issued our first Division newsletter. At the time, I remember feeling so much excitement and expectation for our team, our services and our community. While some things happened exactly as planned, there were many things that went completely opposite than anything I imagined. The one thing that has remained constant is our collective **commitment we have for the people we serve daily.** If we are able to align this sustained commitment with our collective goals, I have no doubt that we will achieve greater outcomes of economic security, well-being, and justice for the people of Shelby County.

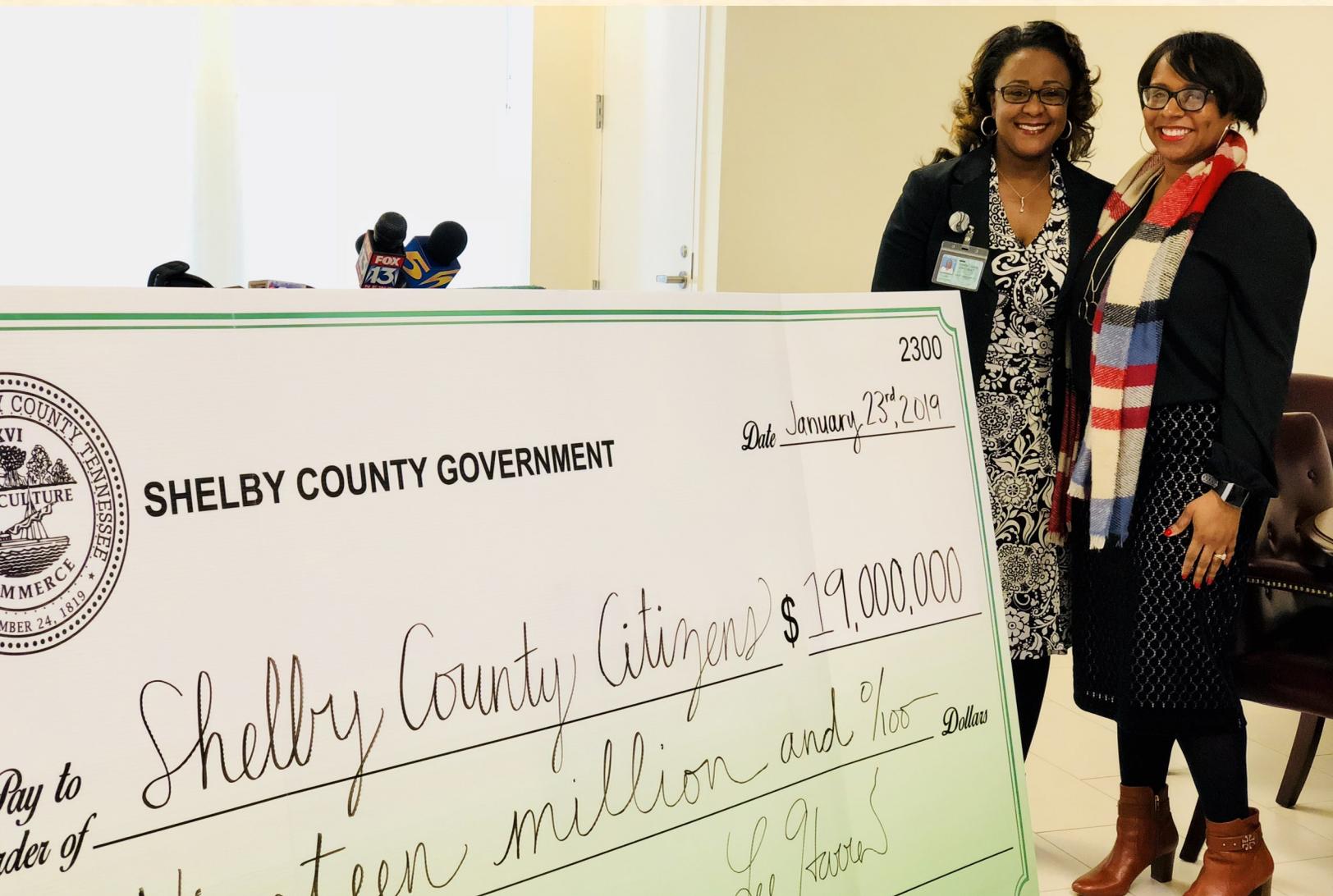
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Keep the Lights On: \$19 million funding for utility assistance

Division of Community Services Director Dorcas Young Griffin, and Community Services Agency Administrator Cherry Whitehead-Thompson

Through one of the largest LIHEAP grants ever received, Shelby County announces \$19 million to assist those struggling to pay their utility bill. Depending on family income and household size, a family can receive up to \$650 in assistance. “It is far too easy for a family to fall behind on their utility bill,” says Mayor Lee Harris. “The aim of this program is to alleviate the stress on families of keeping their homes lit and heated before they receive a cut-off notice.”

Shelby County residents do not need a cut-off notice in order to qualify for up to \$650.

“It is a misconception that you have to have a cut-off notice to receive some financial aid with your power bill,” says Dorcas Young Griffin, Director of Community Services. “We hope to get the word out that your lights can still be on to apply for the Keep the Lights on Program.”

For Shelby County residents to qualify for the program they must complete an application and be living at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. For example, the income for a family of four would need to be \$37,650 or lower. To schedule an appointment, the hotline is open every Monday starting from 8am. That number is 901.222.4299.

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT:
COMMUNITY SERVICES
AGENCY



Shelby County Government Division of Community Services
Shelby County Mayor’s Administration
Dorcas Young Griffin, Director
www.shelbycountyttn.gov



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Youth Assessment Center

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT:
OFFICE OF JUSTICE
INITIATIVES

System of Care

In November of 2018 the Shelby County Board of Commissioners approved a partnership with the University of Tennessee’s Health Sciences Center to pilot a Youth Assessment Center. The Division of Community Services along with other juvenile justice community stakeholders got together to discuss and build a framework for what an assessment center should look like in Shelby County. The Youth Assessment Center’s mission is to assist youth and families in addressing complex needs through early intervention, comprehensive assessment and referral to resources. One of the primary goals is to assist in diverting youth from having recorded touch points with law enforcement and preventing them from getting more deeply involved in the criminal justice system. Restraint-free, trauma-informed staff, voluntary entry, and youth and family services are four quintessential attributes of the Youth Assessment Center. Unlike other models across the country, Shelby County’s Assessment Center’s model is more about **providing a system of care for youth and families** than enforcing a policing system. The Youth Assessment Center will be managed by Jamal Whitlow one of our teams’ newest members.



Advisory Board

The Assessment Center is looking for individuals to serve on the Advisory Board and is currently taking applications. If you are interested in or know someone who would be a good fit, please go to www.shelbycountyttn.gov/16/community-services and scroll down to find the Youth Assessment Center Advisory Board information.

JAMAL WHITLOW is the Shelby County Youth Assessment Center Manager. Whitlow brings to the table a combination of sales, youth work, management, philanthropy and re-entry work experience. During his time with the Workforce Investment Network, he worked directly with youth and young adults and encouraged them to obtain training certifications to enhance employability as a program specialist, all while managing contractors, ensuring grant compliance and providing technical assistance. While at WIN, Whitlow was assigned to a partner grant specifically working with incarcerated and re-entry individuals working on creating employment and training opportunities. He also worked with small businesses to create training grants for ex-offenders as a Business Service Analyst. Whitlow also serves as Board Chair for the Davis YMCA as well as Board Member for the Destiny House.

Got an idea for the February Newsletter? Email your submissions to Janet Lo at Janet.Lo@shelbycountyttn.gov on or before February 15.





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Celebrating 10 Years of the Early Success Coalition

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT:
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT &
OUTREACH

Improving Early Childhood Development

The Early Success Coalition is a collective impact initiative that promotes shared, evidence-based practices proven to improve early childhood development and school readiness within Shelby County. This network of community-focused agencies and nonprofits have come together in their vision of a community where:

- All babies are born healthy,*
- All children experience safe and nurturing relationships,*
- All children are kindergarten ready.*



The Coalition works towards these goals through coordination of home visiting services in the city, promotion of evidence-based parenting classes, and by raising awareness of the importance of infant mental health.



Celebrating Ten Years

This month the Early Success Coalition celebrates ten years of community service in Shelby County. At a recent reception, the Early Success Coalition recognized its progress over the past ten years in its new home at Porter-Leath’s Early Childhood Support Center. The organization, formerly housed under Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital,

moved to its new home at Porter-Leath in July of 2018.

President of Porter-Leath, Sean Lee, says: “The Early Success Coalition has spent 10 years bringing organizations and professionals together to improve early childhood outcomes across Shelby County. Porter-Leath is proud to be the administrative home for the Coalition to continue this critical work.”

To learn more or to refer an individual to a home visiting program or parenting class, visit earlysuccesscoalition.com.



Above right photo of Porter-Leath President, Sean Lee, speaking at the 10 year reception. Pictured above left to right: Sandra Allen, Senior Advisor, Early Success Coalition; Karen Harrell, Senior V.P. of Early Childhood Services, Porter-Leath; and Kellie Mitchell, Director, Early Success Coalition





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Big Accomplishments and Big Changes

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT:
CRIME VICTIM CENTER
& RAPE CRISIS CENTER

Crime Victims Center & Rape Crisis Center Highlights from 2018

- Served 670 victims per month for a total of 8052 people in 2018
- Conducted nearly 50 sexual assault forensic exams and helped over 140 victims file for orders of protection each month
- Increased our capacity to provide trauma counseling to victims of violent crime
- Expanded our reach to underserved populations through increased partnerships with agencies and groups that work with victims who identify as LGBTQ, those who are immigrants or refugees, and youth victims of crime
- Received our first ever primary prevention grant which, among other things, funds a pilot initiative to bring dating and sexual violence prevention programming to Shelby County Schools

New Year, New Office!

As of February, the Crime Victims Center & Rape Crisis Center will be at 1060 Madison Avenue. Our newly renovated building will provide our staff the ability to meet privately with victims of crime as well as host meetings and trainings with our partners.

We also plan to continue our partnerships with non-traditional community organizations, like the Memphis Botanic Garden and the Levitt Shell, to help us engage Shelby County residents in achieving our mission, both by connecting those who have experienced victimization and trauma with necessary resources and engaging those who want an avenue to change the culture of violence and oppression in our community.

Home sweet home



1060 Madison Avenue





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Community Spotlight: Breast Cancer Summit



The Memphis Breast Cancer Consortium (MBCC) will present the 5th Annual Live! Memphis Breast Cancer Summit, Saturday, February 9, 2019, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Holiday Inn at The University of Memphis.

Registration is open now at www.mbcc.live. Women of all ages are invited to come enjoy a day of life-saving breast health workshops and onsite mammograms. Attendees will also be treated to breakfast and lunch, a knowledge gift bag and much more.

Community Spotlight: Men Healing Men Two-Day Barbershop Retreat

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHTS

Learning, Healing, and Enhancing Fathers through a FREE two-day curriculum.

Learn, grow and heal is guided by the Nurturing Fathering curriculum where participants to this free forum will learn about culturally appropriate strategies and programs for trauma impacted families. You will increase your knowledge regarding the connection between cultural assets and the social determinants on health and become initiated into the *Men Healing Men and Communities* Network. Be engaged in interactive fathering activities and drumming by Dr. Gregory Washington, LCSW of the University of Memphis. Not to mention, FREE haircuts and food will be provided!

<https://barbershoptalkretreatmarch.eventbrite.com>

Who should attend:

1. New Fathers and dads with young children
2. Fathers who want support and resources
3. Men who want to mentor families

March 1st, 2019, 5:30pm to 8:30pm

March 2nd, 2019, 9:00am to 3:00pm

Participants must commit to attend both dates in their entirety. Please register at the link or pick up paper forms at UPP by February 25.

SAVE THE DATE

STATE OF THE COUNTY



FEATURING MAYOR LEE HARRIS

FRIDAY ★ FEB 15 ★ 3PM ★ DOWNTOWN

Formal invite coming soon.

Want someone from Community Services to come to your event? Call 901-222-2092 or email us at CommunityServicesInfo@shelbycountyttn.gov for the Office of Community Engagement & Outreach.

