March 2019 Edition

SHELBY COUNTY GOVERNMENT DIVISION OF
COMMUNITY SERVICES™

Addressing underlining 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

Spring Into Action

Easter Bunnies, March Madness, and Zyrtec all undeniably mark the beginning of Spring. **Spring is a time for renewal**. This first month of Spring also marks the end of the first quarter of this new year and offers us time to reflect, reassess, and reprioritize where we are and where we want to be. This time and season sets the perfect stage for each of us to get into action towards our goals personally and collectively. While I am not certain of each of your personal goals, I know that collectively we have identified goals that we are working towards as a division (*See January 2019 newsletter if you need a refresher*). As we all do our part to progress, I am **challenging us to individually take each of these actions below to spring us forward collectively**:

1. **Identify a new skill or strategy that you want to learn** (or improve). Utilize the County Training Department to take a class. Check out a webinar, book, or podcast that will help you develop. If you need some suggestions, ask your department manager.
2. **Share about the resources available through the Division of Community Services** to at least five people. Share the Resource Sheet. Encourage folks to like and follow our social media pages. Send this newsletter to your family and friends.
3. **Introduce our team to new organizations within your village** that we can possibly coordinate services with. Many times there are volunteer organizations, places of worship, or smaller nonprofit organizations that have people or other resources that they are looking to give. Every person in this division has resources within their own networks that we can all build on.
4. **Commit to making a personal connection to a community organization, group or project that does work to support wellbeing and justice within Shelby County**. This includes other departments and divisions within Shelby County Government. Join a board. Volunteer a few hours a month. Take time to reach out to staff and talk more about what they do. Even the smallest connection that you make with others can create significant connections for our division, and more importantly, the people that we serve in the future.

As an added incentive for springing into action, all staff who participate in this will receive a chance to be entered into a drawing for a $25 gift card. Just **fill out the survey HERE by April 15th** to submit your information. I feel confident that as we work to achieve our personal knowledge and contributions, it only makes us stronger and more united to better address the needs of the community. I hope that every single one of us commits to the challenge today!

Sincerely,
Dorcas Young Griffin
Director, Division of Community Services

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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.

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Kim Cox, Administrator

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With 500+ Applications a Day, CSA Expands to Meet Demand

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY

When Shelby County announced its increased funding for utility assistance, residents came out by large numbers to prove the need was truly there. With over 500 mail-in applications per day, phones ringing around the clock, and people stopping by, needless to say, demand is high. The Community Services Agency overseas LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) and services that KEEP THE LIGHTS ON. To meet demand, the agency **SPRUNG INTO ACTION** and has grown its staff and streamlined services. But there is something the residents and partners of Shelby County can do to create a smoother process for all.

Help Us Help You

No walk-ins
No incomplete applications
Apply later if you can

No incomplete applications please — they slow the process as they must be returned
No walk-ins — Applications are only accepted by mail or call on Mondays to get an appointment
Apply later if you can — The funding will last so consider applying later when you'll want you're a/c on.

Are you eligiblie? For emergency utility assistance you MUST be a Shelby County resident, have income below 150% of the FPL, and prove an unexpected circumstance, and have either a senior, young child, or disabled individual at home. For regular assistance, you MUST be a Shelby County resident, and have income below 150%. Applications and full criteria can be found at: http://www.shelbycountytn.gov/847

Or call the appointment line on Mondays: 901-222-4299

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DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

Providing Jobs and Training to Youth

MAYOR LEE HARRIS'
SUMMER WORK
EXPERIENCE
WWW.SHELBYCOUNTYTN.GOV/YOUTH-JOBS

With spring in full bloom, it reminds us that summer is around the corner when summer schedules kick-in. There are more than 25,000 high school students and nearly 100,000 pre-career young adults who reside in Shelby County each summer. These students and young adults face limited opportunities to learn new skills, make new friends and create unique memories. The Summer Work Experience provides a safe environment for students and young adults to achieve all three goals – all while being paid.

WHAT IS THE YOUTH WORKFORCE LEAGUE?
The Youth Workforce League is a seven-week summer work experience that teaches students professional skills through a variety of job placements all over Shelby County. Additionally, program participants gain valuable connections and knowledge through a weekly professional development course. Hours are Monday – Friday, 9AM – 4PM and pays $12 per hour.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE
Young adults who have earned a high school diploma (or equivalent) and are between the ages of 18 and 24 this summer are invited to apply for the Summer Work Experience - Youth Workforce League.

WHAT IS THE HIRING PROCESS?
For more information about the program, the Youth Conservation League for high school students, or to apply, go to this site by April 12, 2019:
www.shelbycountytn.gov/3485/Youth-Jobs

Got an idea for the April Newsletter? Email your submissions to Janet Lo at Janet.Lo@shelbycountytn.gov by April 15.

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Leadership is Essential to Reform: Pretrial Services has a New Executive Director

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: PRETRIAL SERVICES

Spring brings changes and, for Pretrial Services, fresh leadership with deep roots in justice. Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris has appointed **Llana Greer** as Executive Director of Pretrial Services for Shelby County. Ms. Greer has been with Pretrial Services for more than 25 years. As manager at Pretrial Services, Ms. Greer worked with the MacArthur Foundation, the Justice Management Institute, and the Sheriff's Office on best practices for individuals introduced to the justice system. She will **work on reforms that will lead to a more equitable, safe, and cost saving operation.**

"Our goal is really nothing less than to be a pioneer in pretrial services. We plan to expand the use of efficient, accurate, and unbiased tools. We want to **make an impact on lives and expand fairness** in our criminal justice system," says Mayor Harris. "In order to be effective at this kind of work, you need someone with deep understanding and capacity to lead. We have found that in Ms. Greer."

"I have spent my career in Pretrial Services. This is work I am very passionate about," says Ms. Greer. "I look forward to leading this department as Shelby County Government embarks on innovative reforms."

"**Shelby County has roughly 2,900 men and women in county jail facilities**," says Mayor Harris. "Many are not considered a threat to public safety and could go home to await their trial date, if they had money for bail. They stay in our jails primarily because they don't have any money. **This comes at a tremendous cost**. It is nearly $100 per day to house an inmate waiting for trial. A simple back-of-the-envelope calculation would reveal that the costs of detention [to Shelby County] are more than $100 million per year."

> "Using technology and up-to-date tools, we can change the lives of thousands of people involved with the criminal justice system, save precious resources, and still keep our community safe."
> — Mayor Lee Harris

But there is a tool available that uses data to decide if a non-violent offender should have a bail set or not. This technology is called the Public Safety Assessment or PSA. Using data collected from detainees, the PSA predicts is someone poses a safety risk and can be expected to show up for trial. Using an algorithm, the PSA creates a score based on several risk factors like age at current arrest, charges, prior convictions, and prior failure to appear in court. Among other duties, Ms. Greer will be tasked with implementation of this technology.

"We will soon **begin the important work of criminal justice reform** through pretrial services," says Mayor Harris. "Using technology and up-to-date tools, we can change the lives of thousands of people involved with the criminal justice system, save precious resources, and still **keep our community safe**."

Want a representative from Community Services to come to your event? Email us at CommunityServicesInfo@shelbycountytn.gov or complete this form.

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Spring Season Sets the Perfect Stage: Come Meet Community Services

Above: Peter Pan from Playhouse on the Square and children at WKNO-CashSaver's *Ready to Learn Fair* dance on stage as Community Services and other agencies shared their services.

The best way for residents to learn about Community Services and access programs is to be in touch with someone from our incredible team. Join us for an upcoming event all around Shelby County.

Shelby County Schools Community Health Fair
at Hickory Ridge Middle School
March 30, 11am—2pm

Youth, College, and Resource Fair
at Hamilton High School
April 5, 8am—1pm

Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center Grand Opening
1060 Madison Avenue
April 3, 4-6pm

Right: CVRCC staff greet residents who enter the new welcome area at 1060 Madison Avenue.

Frayser Community's Memphis Birthday Celebration and Fair
at the Ed Rice Community Center
April 6, 10am—3pm

All Community Services departments will be present

FedEx Freight Hiring Event at American Job Center on 155 Angelus Street
April 9, 9am—1pm

Fair Housing Conference at the Shelby County Department of Housing
April 11, 8am—1:30pm

Garden of Lights Memorial Celebration at the Memphis Botanic Garden
April 23, 6pm

Housing and Resource Fair at the Union HUD-VASH Office
April 26, 10am—2pm

DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH