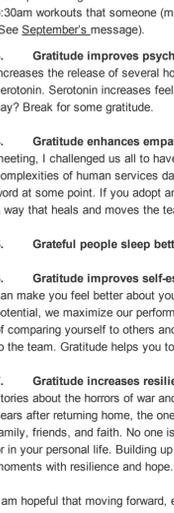




Where Human Needs and Government Intersect

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 well-being and justice. We strive to be a highly organized team and partner, dedicated to promoting a strong community where all people are able to reach their full potential.



Director's Message

Honoring Those That Serve

Activating the Benefits of Gratitude

This month, Shelby County and the entire nation focused attention on honoring men and women who have served our Country through military service. During our own Annual Veterans' Day Luncheon, Celebration Breakfast, and daily e-stories this month of employees who have served, we have had the privilege of honoring those who have chosen to serve millions of us that they will never even meet. To every individual who has ever served our country reading this message, the Division of Community Services says THANK YOU!

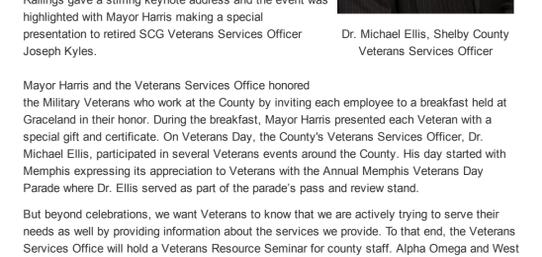
Honoring veterans and others who dedicate themselves to service is indeed a privilege for us because it allows us to **activate our gratitude**. This link between honor and gratitude is what makes November one of the most special months on the calendar. The more trips around the sun I go, I realize how critical being grateful is, not only to surviving each day, but to thrive and live our best lives. Research also supports my realization. According to a recent article in *Psychology Today*, there are several scientifically proven ways that gratitude benefits our lives:

- Gratitude opens the door to more (and better) relationships.** If there is one thing that I have learned within my career and life in general, relationships matter. Good relationships are built on trust among people. The more you can focus on the good within your co-workers, clients, supervisors, and even family and friends, the easier it is to be vocal about what you appreciate about them. Who doesn't welcome being appreciated?
- Gratitude improves physical health.** Grateful people have less aches and pains and self report feeling healthier than others. Apparently, gratitude also helps to better endure the 5:30am workouts that someone (me) committed to because of the Division's plan for end-of-care (See [September's message](#)).
- Gratitude improves psychological health.** An intentional moment of gratitude increases the release of several hormones and neurotransmitters, including dopamine and serotonin. Serotonin increases feelings of satisfaction, happiness, and optimism. Having a rough day? Break for some gratitude.
- Gratitude enhances empathy and reduces aggression.** During this year's annual staff meeting, I challenged us all to have grace for ourselves and others as we work through the complexities of human services daily. It is inevitable that we will all make a mistake in action or word at some point. If you adopt an attitude of gratitude, it is far more likely that you will react in a way that heals and moves the team (and yourself) forward in a positive, productive way.
- Grateful people sleep better.** Thanksgiving > Insomnia. Is there any debate here?
- Gratitude improves self-esteem.** One of the greatest superpowers of gratitude is how it can make you feel better about yourself. When we feel good about our own abilities and potential, we maximize our performance at work and home. Gratitude also reduces the likelihood of comparing yourself to others and minimizing your awesome unique skill set and contribution to the team. Gratitude helps you to remember that you are indeed a rock star!
- Gratitude increases resilience.** As a Vietnam Veteran, my father has told countless stories about the horrors of war and conflict. Even as he struggled through those years and the years after returning home, the one thing that kept him was his being focused on gratitude for his family, friends, and faith. No one is immune to challenges and difficulties, whether here at work or in your personal life. Building up a reserve of gratitude can help you to face those inevitable moments with resilience and hope.

I am hopeful that moving forward, each of us will commit to activating our gratitude individually and collectively every day. As we move towards a culture of gratitude, the better positioned we will be to best serve Shelby County and her families, children, and individuals.

Dorcas Young Griffin
Director of the Division of Community Services
Shelby County Government

[Read More.](#)



Office of Community Engagement and Outreach

Honoring Our Veterans

The Shelby County Veterans Services Office partnered with other Veterans organizations to provide information and resources at events throughout this month honoring our Veterans and their families.

The month-long Veterans celebrations began with the 17th Annual Military Appreciation Luncheon held at the University of Memphis Holiday Inn. Sponsored by the County (Mayor Lee Harris) and City (Mayor Jim Strickland), the luncheon hosted over 600 Veterans and their family members. Memphis Police Director Michael Hallings gave a stirring keynote address and the event was highlighted with Mayor Harris making a special presentation to retired SCG Veterans Services Officer Joseph Kyles.



Dr. Michael Ellis, Shelby County Veterans Services Officer

Mayor Harris and the Veterans Services Office honored the Military Veterans who work at the County by inviting each employee to a breakfast held at Graceland in their honor. During the breakfast, Mayor Harris presented each Veteran with a special gift and certificate. On Veterans Day, the County's Veterans Services Officer, Dr. Michael Ellis, participated in several Veterans events around the County. His day started with Memphis expressing its appreciation to Veterans with the Annual Memphis Veterans Day Parade where Dr. Ellis served as part of the parade's pass and review stand.

But beyond celebrations, we want Veterans to know that we are actively trying to serve their needs as well by providing information about the services we provide. To that end, the Veterans Services Office will hold a Veterans Resource Seminar for county staff. Alpha Omega and West Tennessee Veterans Cemetery are two resources who will participate in this event and provide useful information for the Veterans to utilize.

Contact your Shelby County Veterans Service Office at 901-222-4237, located in 1060 Madison Ave. (Memphis) and 7930 Nelson Street (Millington).

[Compensation and Pension](#)

[Disability and Increases](#)

[Upload Supporting Evidence](#)

[Status of Claims](#)

[Appeals](#)

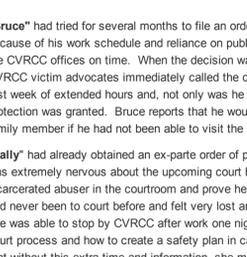
[Burial Benefits](#)

[Discharge Character Upgrade](#)



Office of Justice Initiatives

Treatment for Opioid Addiction in Jails



123 opioid overdose deaths in Shelby County last year.
Statewide last year, over 6 million opioid prescriptions were filled.

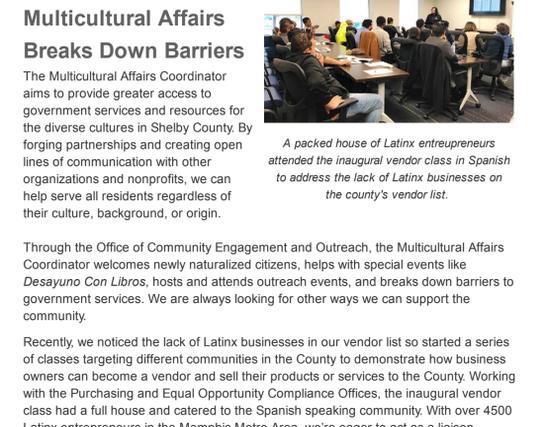
Shelby County Government is actively fighting the most pressing health crisis through multiple channels. One of the ways is through our Division's Office of Justice Initiatives (OJI). In 2018, Shelby County had 123 opioid overdose deaths. Among new heroin users, approximately 75% report abusing prescription opioids prior to using heroin. In 2018, Tennessee had over 6 million opioid prescriptions filled for pain. Anyone can become addicted to opioids or experience an overdose.

Last October, the Office of Justice Initiatives was awarded the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Site-Based Program (COAP) to help on the front lines of the opioid crisis. The core goal of COAP is to reduce opioid overdoses in Shelby County. OJI will do this through many vital partnerships. UT's Center for Addiction Science (CAS) will advise Addiction Peer Recovery Specialists to help screen and refer individuals at risk of overdose. The University of Memphis will be evaluating this program's effectiveness and outcomes. The work of the COAP initiative cannot be successful without other key partners like the Sheriff's Office, Health Department, Memphis Police Department, and the U.S Attorney's Office. With these stakeholders, we will:

- Increase the number of screenings for risk of overdose.*
- Increase the number of referrals to CAS and other treatment providers.*
- Increase the number of connections of individuals to CAS and other treatment providers.*
- Increase the number of enrollments in treatment via CAS and other treatment providers.*
- Increase the number of diversions from incarceration to CAS and other treatment providers.*

The stakeholder team convened in October for their first meeting. The team agreed to recommend a screening tool to help detect individuals at risk of overdose. Ideally, this tool will be used at multiple agencies throughout the county as part of an integrated response plan to refer individuals into treatment.

If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, contact the Tennessee REDLINE: 1-800-889-9789. [READ MORE.](#)



Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center

Violence Doesn't Stop After Business Hours. Neither Do We.

The Shelby County Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center (CVRCC) is proud to announce the expansion of business hours from 8am-6pm Monday-Friday. These extended hours allow us to be able to serve walk-in clients who may need help in filing an order of protection or preparing a victim's compensation application. Our trauma counselors are also available for scheduled appointments during those extended hours.

THREE TRUE STORIES. Extended hours of our services now have easier access. Here are three stories.

"Bruce" had tried for several months to file an order of protection against a family member, but because of his work schedule and reliance on public transportation, he was never able to get to the CVRCC offices on time. When the decision was made to extend the hours, one of the CVRCC victim advocates immediately called the client to let him know. Bruce came during our first week of extended hours and, not only was he able to complete the process, but the order of protection was granted. Bruce reports that he would still be enduring the harassment from his family member if he had not been able to visit the CVRCC after hours.

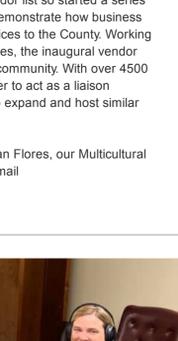
"Sally" had already obtained an ex-parte order of protection against her abusive partner, but she was extremely nervous about the upcoming court hearing where she would have to face her incarcerated abuser in the courtroom and prove her case in order to obtain a 1-year order. Sally had never been to court before and felt very lost and confused about what to expect. Luckily, she was able to stop by CVRCC after work one night to talk with a victim advocate about the court process and how to create a safety plan in case the order was not granted. Sally reports that without this extra time and information, she might have been too afraid to show up in court.

"Steve and Simone", husband and wife, were in need of an order of protection against a neighbor who had been harassing them. Simone was from another country and is not yet licensed to drive, so she depended on her husband for transportation. Steve's work schedule, however, prevented them from coming in during our previous business hours. Fortunately, Simone heard a radio interview announcing our extended hours and immediately told her husband. Both Steve and Simone were very appreciative not only for the extended hours, but for the pleasantness of the employees and process not being too difficult.

Even with the extended hours, CVRCC assault have never been commonly known as 'rape kits' but it's so much more than that) and accompanying victim advocacy 24/7/365. For victims of sexual violence who aren't quite sure whether they want to report a crime or seek services, they can always call our 24-hour sexual assault hotline (901-222-4350) to talk to someone.

And on any given evening or weekend, CVRCC staff are out in the community, facilitating violence prevention trainings as well as offering education sessions to schools, churches, and other agencies in order to achieve the CVRCC vision:

We envision a healthier, safer, and more well-informed Shelby County, where victims of crime are treated with dignity and respect as they heal from trauma and navigate the justice system, and community members are empowered to join together to reduce violence and its traumatic effects. [Read More.](#)



Community Engagement and Outreach

Multicultural Affairs Breaks Down Barriers

The Multicultural Affairs Coordinator aims to provide greater access to government services and resources for the diverse cultures in Shelby County. By forging partnerships and creating open lines of communication with other organizations and nonprofits, we can help serve all residents regardless of their culture, background, or origin.

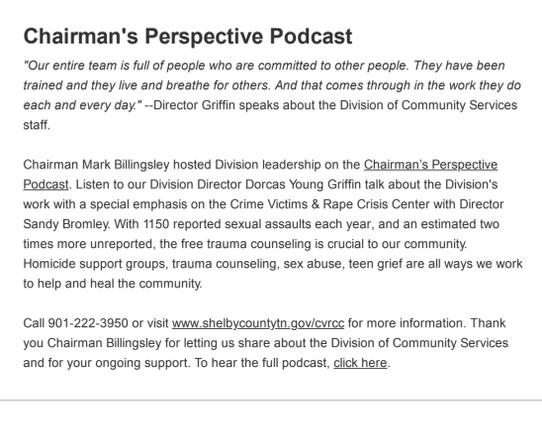


A packed house of Latinx entrepreneurs attended the inaugural vendor class in Spanish to address the lack of Latinx businesses on the county's vendor list.

Through the Office of Community Engagement and Outreach, the Multicultural Affairs Coordinator welcomes newly naturalized citizens, helps with special events like *Desayuno Con Libros*, hosts and attends outreach events, and breaks down barriers to government services. We are always looking for other ways we can support the community.

Recently, we noticed the lack of Latinx businesses in our vendor list so started a series of classes targeting different communities in the County to demonstrate how business owners can become a vendor and sell their products or services to the County. Working with the Purchasing and Equal Opportunity Compliance Offices, the inaugural vendor class had a full house and catered to the Spanish speaking community. With over 4500 Latinx entrepreneurs in the Memphis Metro Area, we're eager to act as a liaison between the county and this growing population. We hope to expand and host similar classes for other community groups in the coming year.

If you have an event or group that would like to meet with Ivan Flores, our Multicultural Affairs Coordinator, please contact us at 901-222-3993 or email Ivan.Flores@shelbycountyttn.gov for more information.



Chairman's Perspective Podcast

"Our entire team is full of people who are committed to other people. They have been trained and they live and breathe for others. And that comes through in the work they do each and every day." --Director Griffin speaks about the Division of Community Services staff.

Chairman Mark Billingsley hosted Division leadership on the [Chairman's Perspective Podcast](#). Listen to our Division Director Dorcas Young Griffin talk about the Division's work with a special emphasis on the Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center with Director Sandy Bromley. With 1150 reported sexual assaults each year, and an estimated two times more unreported, the free trauma counseling is crucial to our community. Homicide support groups, trauma counseling, sex abuse, teen grief are all ways we work to help and heal the community.

Call 901-222-3950 or visit www.shelbycountyttn.gov/cvcc for more information. Thank you Chairman Billingsley for letting us share about the Division of Community Services and for your ongoing support. To hear the full podcast, [click here](#).

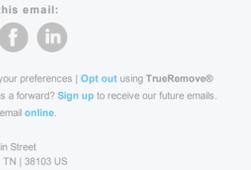
Community Spotlight

GREATER MEMPHIS FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTER

Need help managing or reducing your household debt? Want advice on how to build or restore your personal credit? Greater Memphis Financial Empowerment Center (GMFEC), a program of the Shelby County Trustee's Office, provides all Shelby County residents with one-on-one financial counseling, for as long as they need it, free. Certified financial counselors are available by appointment at the GMFEC hub office or at one of their co-location sites throughout Shelby County. Financial counselors help clients create budgets, increase savings and much more. It's a one-stop shop for additional resources to help clients succeed. Services are always free and available to all Shelby County residents, regardless of income. Schedule your free session today by calling 901-390-4200.

Greater Memphis Financial Empowerment Center

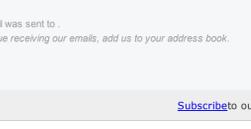
Free One-on-One Financial Counseling



Community Engagement and Outreach

The Division Cares About You

Burnout is a real thing. Work and life challenges can wear you thin, but self-care is the perfect antidote. The Division of Community Services is pleased to announce its division-wide employee self-care program.



Working Towards Wellness – A Lifelong Season of Self-Care

This program has four components: nutrition, aerobic, relaxation, and mindset/motivation/emotional well-being. Throughout the year, we will provide employer-sponsored activities that will support and encourage our employees in their commitment to self-care. Activities may include bringing in a motivational speaker, an organized activity, or just a reminder that services are available. Employees are encouraged to take from the program what works in their own lives and add to it where needed.

The kick-off for the program is the Division-wide **No-Go Tea Party** on November 26. All Division employees received a "teabag" invitation and were encouraged to take a "mental break" from their workday and enjoy a cup of tea at their desks – all at the same exact time. After enjoying their cup of tea, employees returned to their desks refreshed and rejuvenated.

Throughout the months of **November and December Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** wellness seminars entitled **Thriving Through the Holidays and Work-Life Balance** are being offered at the various Division of Community Services locations for all employees.

Real All Staff News

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Division of Community Services
Office of Community Engagement and Outreach
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