

# New beginning inspires unity, growth

It is with great enthusiasm and honor that I address you today as the newly appointed Commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services. As you may have read in Secretary Friedlander's announcement earlier this month, Gov. Andy Beshear made this appointment official on June 16. You can watch the Office of Public Affairs video of this announcement [here](#).

I wanted to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude for the warm messages of welcome I have received since this announcement, and, really, since I was named Acting Commissioner in January stepping

## From the Commissioner



into this role. I am truly humbled by the trust placed in me by the Beshear-Coleman Administration and Secretary Friedlander to lead this remarkable DCBS team.

My younger self, starting at this agency as a frontline social worker in my Eastern Kentucky home 26 years ago, could never imagine I would have this opportunity. But I was fortunate to have good management role models and

chances to move up through many positions. My work history began like many of yours may have started – I went from Family Services Office Supervisor to Service Region Clinical Associate, then to Service Region Administrator Associate and Northeastern Service Region Administrator. I came to DCBS Central Office as Director of Division of Service Regions in 2015, then moved to position of Chief of Staff to the Commissioner in 2018 to help implement strategies and programs to increase efficiency and productivity to better support individuals and families we serve. And finally, I started working closely with former Commissioner Marta Miranda-Straub as Deputy Commissioner in 2020.

*Read more [here](#)*



A DCBS Shout Out to **Jessica Bowman, Angela Green and Melinda Vise** for being featured speakers in the recent resilience webinar on "Healing Through Writing." They not only shared of themselves through their writing; in the webinar, they also gave insight on why and what they write during the discussion, moderated by Miriam Silman.

*Read the story, and learn how you can win a writing journal [here](#).*



## LivingWell Promise due 7/1

Completing the Promise by July 1 is a requirement for Kentucky Employees' Health Plan Members to earn up to \$480 in premium discounts in 2024. To complete your LivingWell Promise, take the 10-minute, online WebMD Health Assessment at [WebMDHealth.com/kehq](https://www.WebMDHealth.com/kehq) or get a biometric screening at a LivingWell Clinic or your local health department.

## Award Nominations Deadline is July 15

Nominations for the 2023 DCBS Employee Recognition Awards, honoring service and exemplary leadership, are due July 15. Read more about the award categories and how to nominate [here](#).

# Dennis named Champion for Children



**DCBS Commissioner Lesa Dennis accepts the Children's Alliance Champion for Children's Award from group President Michelle Sanborn.**

Congratulations to DCBS Commissioner Lesa Dennis, who recently received the Children's Alliance Champion for Children's Award from group President Michelle Sanborn. Commissioner Dennis was selected for the award due to her partnership and outstanding leadership in supporting foster care and residential providers across the Commonwealth.

"I'm so honored to receive this recognition from the Children's Alliance," Acting Commissioner Dennis said. "Receiving the Champion for Children award is a humbling recognition of the tireless

efforts our entire team has put into child protection and prevention. It serves as a reminder that our community's collective commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of every child is making a difference here in Kentucky."

The Children's Alliance is a state association of 36 private agencies that provide foster care and behavioral health services to Kentucky's most vulnerable children and families.

"Commissioner Dennis and her team work cooperatively and in a true partnership with private providers," Sanborn said.

*Read more [here](#)*

## 18-month strategic plan shows DCBS vision, principles

The 21st Century DCBS 18-Month Strategic Plan Overview and Implementation Report is now available. This is our department's foundational framework and implementation timeline - a roadmap to help us grow and meet our goals over the next year and a half. Please follow [this link](#) to read the report. Leadership thanks all staff and trusted advisors who contributed to this in-depth and transformational plan.



## Forgotten Initiative named DCBS Community Partner Superhero

Congratulations to The Forgotten Initiative (TFI) of Florence, for being named a DCBS Community Partner Superhero!

TFI Advocate Tiffani Saltsman and her husband, Jacob, are DCBS foster parents and members of Florence Baptist Church. Tiffani started a branch of The Forgotten Initiative, a faith based program that supports youth in out of home care, in Boone County. In partnership with them, Northern Bluegrass Service Region staff has successfully implemented a Faith Based Visitation program for families in Boone County. And TFI supports Boone County DCBS staff in numerous ways. They regularly show up at the office with treats for staff. Recently, they treated all protection and permanency staff in Boone County to lunch.

Learn more about TFI [here](#).



**Northern Bluegrass Service Region Administrator Kelly Skerchok presents Tiffani Saltsman and The Forgotten Initiative with the DCBS Community Partner Superhero Award.**

# DSR April scorecard shows progress

The Division of Service Regions has released the April 2023 Scorecard. Here are some of the highlights.

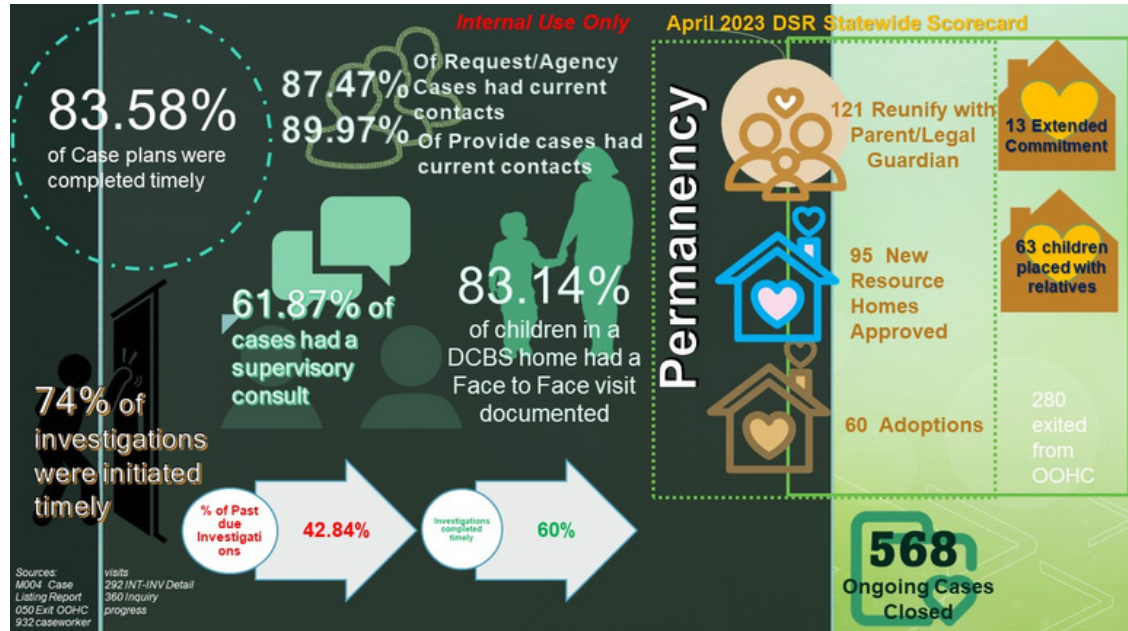
There were a total of 280 children that exited OOHC and in April; 121 of those children were reunified with their parents, 60 were adopted, 63 were placed with relatives, and 13 children chose to extend commitment.

Our R&C Teams approved 95 new resource homes.

In April, statewide we closed 568 ongoing request/agency APS/CPS cases.

We have made significant improvements in the following outcomes from March to April in serving Kentucky families, children, and vulnerable adults timely.

- Case plans completed timely
- The number of request case contacts entered timely
- The number of cases with a documented consult entered into TWIST timely



- The number of past due investigations
- The number of investigations completed timely

There were some decreases across the state from March to April in the following areas:

- The number of provide case contacts entered timely
- Investigations initiated timely
- The number of F2F visits documented in TWIST

This scorecard utilizes evaluation calculations for the following elements: Timely Initiations, Consults, Case plans, Timely Completion, Contacts, % Past Due, and Caseworker visits. It references the 050 Enter/Exit Statistic report for reasons in which children exited care; Parent reunification, adoption, etc.

The 360 inquiry report was used to look at the total number of new resource homes approved.

## DCBS joins Judicial Mental Health Summit

DCBS staff joined the Kentucky Court of Justice's Kentucky Judicial Mental Health Summit, which brought together stakeholders supporting justice-involved citizens affected by mental illness, substance use disorder, and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities, earlier this month. Our Chief Medical Director Dr. David Lohr joined DBHDID Medical Director Dr. Allen Brenzel to present "Serving Youth with High Acuity Needs." We appreciate the summit for helping DCBS make greater connections to support the state's mental health network.



**Left:** DCBS Medical Director David Lohr presents on Serving Youth with High Acuity Needs. **Right:** Southern Bluegrass Service Region Administrator Associate Beth Bowles; Division of Service Regions (DSR) Assistant Director Tiffany Mullis; Division of Protection and Permanency Assistant Director Vanessa Hunter; Commissioner Lesa Dennis; Adult Protection Branch Manager Cliff Bryant; Jefferson Service Region Administrator Amanda Gehring; DSR Director Katy Mullins; High Acuity Coordinator Jennifer Schworm; and DSR Central Intake Branch Manager Christina Lucas.

# DCBS recognizes World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

DCBS Leadership and staff recognized World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15. Adult Protective Services staff in Jefferson County wore purple to spread awareness (right). And (below), Commissioner Lesa Dennis, CHFS Secretary Eric Friedlander and Gov. Andy Beshear spoke at the Capitol recognition event, where APS Branch Manager Cliff Bryant also spoke about concrete supports to help seniors and participants planted purple flags with positive messages,

Learn more about preventing adult maltreatment at [kysteam.ky.gov](http://kysteam.ky.gov).



# DSR Director Mullins retiring

Congratulations to Division of Service Regions Director Katy Mullins who is retiring Aug. 1. DSR staff and department leadership bid her farewell earlier this month. There was even a virtual goodbye from staff around the state!

Katy started her DCBS career in 1995 as a frontline worker. In 2002, she became a supervisor in Kenton County. Soon she moved up into other roles including Service Region Administrator Associate and Service Region Clinical Associate. In 2016, she became Northern Bluegrass Service Region Administrator, and in 2018, she moved to central office as Division of Service Regions Assistant Director, then was appointed to her most recent position of DSR Director in 2019.

Best wishes to Katy as she ends a wonderful career of public service and begins a new chapter!



## Foster care-supporting businesses honored with service awards

Dutch's Chevrolet of Mount Sterling and Stuttgart Motors, two businesses that support state foster youth, were recently honored with Kentucky Governor's Service Awards.

The Dutch's team won the GSA for the Mid-size Business category. They were recognized for their Wheels to the World program, which purchases used vehicles for qualified current and former foster youth. We are so grateful to the Dutch's team and their investment into the foster program. Stuttgart Motors of Lexington received the GSA for the Small Business category. Last year, Stuttgart hosted a car care workshop for foster youth on the basics of car maintenance and overall vehicle care – need-to-know information for young drivers.

Thank you Dutch's Chevrolet and Stuttgart Motors for educating and supporting foster youth!



**Above:** Dutch's Chevrolet of Mount Sterling honored.  
**Below:** Stuttgart Motors of Lexington honored.



# Commissioner, Secretary present to legislative committee

Commissioner Lesa Dennis and Secretary Eric Friedlander presented at the Budget Review Subcommittee on Health and Family Services meeting on DCBS' progress on staff recruitment and retention earlier this month. Commissioner Dennis highlighted new salaries and supports being extended to staff – including locality premium (Jefferson Region), shift premium and critical incident. Plus, a majority of staff will receive a 6 percent raise on July 1. Check out their presentation to get all the details [here](#). And watch a recording of the meeting [here](#).



Commissioner Lesa Dennis and CHFS Secretary Eric Friedlander presented on staff retention and recruitment at the Budget Review Subcommittee on Health and Family Services meeting on June 7.

## Retention – Staff Supports

Shift premium \$5/hr	Locality premium (Jefferson County) \$4/hr
Flexible and hybrid work schedules	Statewide implementation of Field Training Specialists program
Recognizing secondary trauma and implementing critical incident leave	New initiatives to address high caseloads • Alternative response • Community response

## Retention - Salaries

December 2021 – DCBS increased entry level salaries for social worker and family support classifications	May 2022 – General Assembly provided pay increases for social worker and family support classifications	July 2022 – General Assembly provided 8% pay increases for all state employees
July 2022 – Personnel Cabinet implemented special entrance rate	January, May, and December 2022 – DCBS implemented special recruitment rates for varying classifications	July 2023 – General Assembly will provide a 6% pay increase for all state employees

SSW1 total pay increases: \$1,425.83/mo (\$17,109.96/yr). Starting annual salary increased from \$33,644 to \$50,754.  
FSS1 total pay increases: \$1,288.61/mo (\$15,463.32/yr). Starting annual salary increased from \$26,483 to \$41,946.

# Staff interim reviews provide valuable feedback, support

On July 5, performance-eligible employees will receive their 2023 Mid-Year Interim Review online in MyPURPOSE. Employees have an important role in the process. Providing feedback to your manager is essential, and easy, by completing your Self Review.

Employees can review resources on the Performance Management website [here](#) and view the online tutorial, Guide to Performance Management, in MyPURPOSE. To ensure you receive the latest version of the online tutorial follow these steps:

1. Log in to your MyPURPOSE account at [mypurpose.ky.gov](http://mypurpose.ky.gov).
2. Enter "Guide to Performance Management" in the search box in the upper right corner.
3. Select the appropriate training, depending on whether you are an employee or evaluator.



If you are viewing the training for the first time, select the button that says "Launch." If you have previously viewed the training, select the button that says "Request" and then "Request" again, this will ensure you view the most recent content.

For questions or assistance, please contact your agency HR office. For assistance in troubleshooting access to MyPURPOSE, please see the system requirements [here](#).