**Task 1: Agency Selection**

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The agency I have chosen to evaluate is the Henry-Martinsville Department of Social Services. Henry-Martinsville Department of Social Services is located in Martinsville, VA. The name is divided because we serve two localities, Henry County and Martinsville City. This office is a subsidiary of the Virginia Department of Social Services. This is my current place of employment, so I did not have any problems getting permission to evaluate this agency.

The mission of the VDSS is “To design and deliver high-quality human services that help Virginians achieve safety, independence and overall well-being.” (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2022). The Vision of VDSS as a whole is to be “A Commonwealth in which all Virginians have the resources and services they need to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and their communities.” There are key organizations that partner with VDSS to bring care and services to people across the state. The Local Departments of Social Services is where Henry-Martinsville fits in. There are 120 local agencies in Virginia.

Like most Social Services agencies, there are two major departments, Benefits and Services. The Benefits Departments encompass the Clerical Unit, the Intake Unit, and the Ongoing, TANF and Long-Term Care Units. The Benefits Unit will handle the SNAP, Medicaid, TANF and Long-Term Care Services. The Services department includes Child Protective Services (CPS), Adult Protective Service (APS), Foster Care (FC) and the Family Preservation Unit (FPU). The units work together on the Federal IV-E program. This program consists of the Foster Care Unit and two Benefit Program Specialists from the Ongoing units. The unit that I have specifically chosen to evaluate is the Family Preservation Unit. This unit provides services to families in need in order to preserve their current placements. These placements can be biological family, friends, or even non-relative placements.

The Henry-Martinsville Department of Social Services serves a broad population. Mainly in the county, you will find Caucasians and Latinos. The city is a very diverse population, with most of the inhabitants as African Americans. Most of the people the department serves are living in poverty or are close to poverty. There are few good job opportunities throughout the county or the city. Most of the available jobs either require a degree or are in a restaurant or gas station. Henry County is the home to the Martinsville Speedway. The county is tucked into the middle of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. Henry County is approximately 30 minutes – 1 hour to the next largest city. The population from the 2021 census shows “50,248 people live here. While the census shows that there are 74.1% of white people, 22.8% of Black or African American and 6.2%% of Latinos”, (Census.gov, 2023), I do not believe this information to be true. The median household income is $41,103 and there are 17% of persons in poverty. Martinsville City holds 13,517 people. This shows 45% white, 45% black and 6.7% Latino. The median income for Martinsville City is $36,832 with 25.4% in poverty.

As mentioned above, I already work in this agency. I currently work as a Human Services Assistant in a different unit. With that being said, I have seen how much this agency can help people of all ages, races, religions, and sexualities. By evaluating this agency, I can see how the child welfare department interacts with the children, whether it be at school, home or even the library. Seeing how the Family Preservation Unit provides services to the families will help me decide on my future. This evaluation will help me grow as not only a person, but as a Human Services Worker. Most everyone in the agency holds true to the mission statement of “deliver high-quality human services that help Virginians achieve safety, independence and overall well-being.”

References

*Census.gov*. (2023). Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/henrycountyvirginia

*Virginia Department of Social Services*. (2022). Retrieved from https://www.dss.virginia.gov/about/mission\_plan/