



ESS – OPBI Annual Report

Department of Children and Families
Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency
December 4, 2020

Chad Poppell
Secretary

Ron DeSantis
Governor

The 2019-2020 Legislative Annual Report on Food Assistance Program Violations and the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) System

Pursuant to section (s.) 414.34, Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is required to submit a report annually summarizing the administrative complaints and disciplinary actions involving the food assistance program (also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) violations in the following areas (sections 1-7). DCF also is required to report on the progress of the development and implementation of the EBT program.

The Economic Self-Sufficiency (ESS) Office of Public Benefits Integrity (OPBI) is responsible for preventing, detecting, and investigating cases of potential public assistance fraud. Pursuant to s. 414.411, F.S., DCF contracts with the Department of Financial Services, Division of Public Assistance Fraud (DPAF), to conduct investigations of suspected public assistance fraud and, if warranted, pursue prosecution of violations through administrative or judicial means. If DPAF does not pursue an investigation, OPBI may take the case for investigation. This report provides a complete view of the volume and disposition of fraud complaints, investigations, and prosecutions.

The following information is correspondingly numbered as it appears in the authorizing legislation and represent activities conducted during state fiscal year (SFY) 2019-20.

1. A total of **65,595** fraud complaints were received by the OPBI Fraud Reward Assessment Team (FRAT)¹, OPBI Benefit Investigations, and DPAF, and a total of **13,394** food assistance investigations were completed by OPBI Benefit Investigations and DPAF during SFY 2019-20. The number of complaints and investigations are outlined below:

Complaints:

- OPBI FRAT received 11,384 complaints from the public, DCF employees, and other outside entities
- OPBI Benefit Investigations received 36,751 complaints from FRAT, DCF ESS Regional Operations, and generated by data analytics
- DPAF received 17,460 complaints from FRAT and DCF ESS Regional Operations

¹ The OPBI FRAT receives, evaluates, and refers complaints of public assistance fraud provided by the public, DCF employees, and other outside entities. The number of complaints for OPBI Benefit Investigations and DPAF include complaints that are also included in the FRAT complaint total. The investigations of FRAT complaints were conducted by OPBI Benefit Investigations and/or DPAF as appropriate.

Investigations:

- OPBI Benefit Investigations completed 9,571 investigations, and referred 2,563 of those investigations to DPAF for additional investigation
 - DPAF completed 3,823 investigations
2. Criminal prosecutions are pursued by DPAF and reported **1,607** investigations that produced findings of probable cause.²
 3. DPAF reported **80** investigations that produced no findings of probable cause.
 4. The number of administrative complaints filed by OPBI and DPAF relating to public assistance fraud cases are outlined below:

Source	Administrative Complaints Filed
Office of Public Benefits Integrity	1,267
Division of Public Assistance Fraud	850
Total	2,117

5. The disposition of administrative complaints resolved in SFY 2019-20 are outlined below. Complaints “Awaiting Decision” include those pending administrative disqualification hearings.

Disposition	Administrative Results
Disqualified	1,379
Not Disqualified	404
Awaiting Decision	940
Total	2,723

6. DPAF handles criminal prosecutions, and referred **733** criminal complaints to the various state attorneys under s. 414.39, F.S. The disposition of criminal complaints adjudicated in SFY 2019-20 resulted in the following administrative actions:

Disposition	Administrative Results
Disqualified	336
Not Disqualified	158
Awaiting Decision	12
Total	506

² For data elements 2 and 3, pursuant to Florida Statute, DCF is reporting data specific to DPAF’s findings of probable cause. During prior years, DCF reported data for OPBI Benefit Investigations that was not required by Florida Statute.

7. Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)

During SFY 2019-2020 there was no development or implementation of rules governing the electronic benefits transfer program, including any recommendations for statutory changes.



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

December 23, 2020

Mr. Ernie Stoll, Director
Division of Public Assistance Fraud
Department of Financial Services
200 East Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0385

Dear Mr. Stoll:

As required by section 414.34, Florida Statutes, I am enclosing for your records the report on Administrative Complaints and Disciplinary Actions Involving Food Assistance Violations.

This report contains data provided by the Department of Children and Families, Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency and the Department of Financial Services, Division of Public Assistance Fraud. This report has been sent to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the chairs of the appropriate legislative committees.

If you have any questions, please contact Taylor Hatch, Assistant Secretary of the Economic Self-Sufficiency Program, at (850) 717-4691.

Sincerely,

Chad Poppell
Secretary

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

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December 23, 2020

The Honorable Chris Sprowls
Speaker of the House of Representatives
420 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the Administrative Complaints and Disciplinary Actions Involving Food Assistance Violations report as required by section 414.34, Florida Statutes.

This report contains data provided by the Department of Children and Families, Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency and the Department of Financial Services, Division of Public Assistance Fraud. This report has been sent to the President of the Senate and the chairs of the appropriate legislative committees.

If you have any questions, please contact Taylor Hatch, Assistant Secretary of the Economic Self-Sufficiency Program, at (850) 717-4691.

Sincerely,

Chad Poppell
Secretary

Enclosure

CC:

Representative Jay Trumbull, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Chair, House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee
Representative Colleen Burton, Chair, House Health and Human Services
Committee Chair, House Children, Families, and Seniors Subcommittee

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December 23, 2020

The Honorable Wilton Simpson
President of the Florida Senate
409 The Capitol
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the Administrative Complaints and Disciplinary Actions Involving Food Assistance Violations report as required by section 414.34, Florida Statutes.

This report contains data provided by the Department of Children and Families, Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency and the Department of Financial Services, Division of Public Assistance Fraud. This report has been sent to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the chairs of the appropriate legislative committees.

If you have any questions, please contact Taylor Hatch, Assistant Secretary of the Economic Self-Sufficiency Program, at (850) 717-4691.

Sincerely,

Chad Poppell
Secretary

Enclosure

cc:

Senator Kelli Stargel, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senator Aaron Bean, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
Senator Lauren Book, Chair, Senate Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

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