



Ministry of Social Development and Family Services

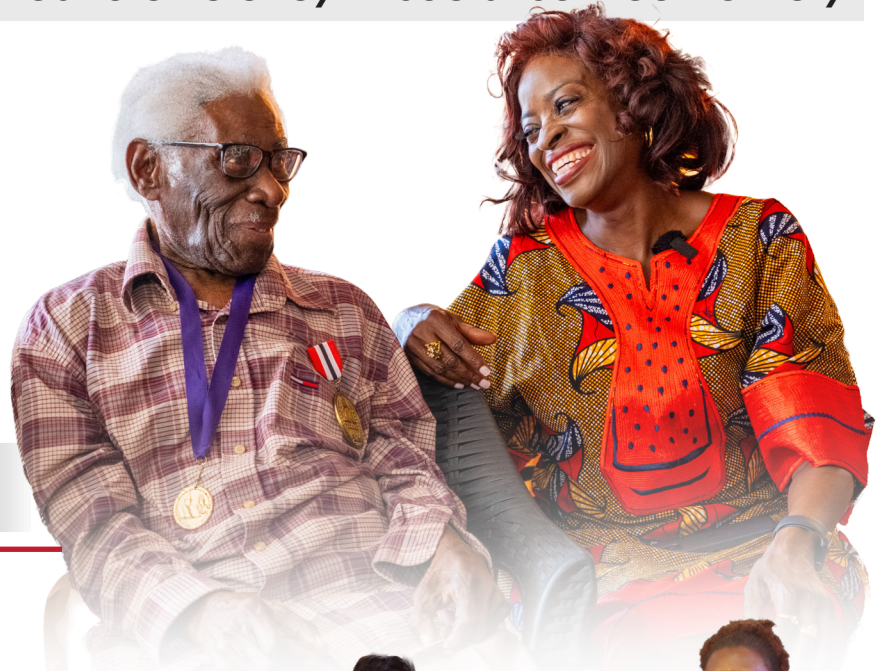
2024 Achievements

Social Development Ministry remains committed to efficiency in Social Service Delivery

Support for the Elderly

The Ministry continues its provision of financial support for the elderly through the Senior Citizens' Pension (SCP). One Hundred and Fourteen Thousand, Two Hundred and Forty-two (114,242) citizens, aged 65 years and over who met the qualifying criteria, received the SCP at a sum of \$4.9 billion. There were Nine Thousand, Six Hundred and Forty-seven (9,647) new beneficiaries. The Ministry also funds Nine (9) Homes for Older Persons and assisted one Hundred and Six (106) elderly persons.

Minister Cox celebrates with centenarian George Alexander who recently turned 100 years old.



Social Development Distributes over \$790,000 in SEED Funding

Under the Sowing Empowerment through Entrepreneurial Development (SEED) Programme, fifty-six (56) individuals received funding valued at Seven Hundred and Ninety-One Thousand, Two Hundred and Ninety-Two Dollars (\$791,292) to either initiate or expand their selected micro-enterprises. SEED Funding is distributed as part of the STEP Up Programme where the Ministry is working towards making persons independent, self-sufficient and empowered.

Permanent Secretary Lenor Baptiste-Simmons makes a presentation to one of the grant recipients.



Ribbon cut for new POS Social Services Centre

The new Port of Spain Social Services Centre was formally opened by Minister Cox on August 26, 2024. The multi-service centre, now located at 132 Henry Street, Port of Spain, showcases the Ministry's aim to enhance service delivery and improve accessibility for those in need and highlights the Ministry's continued focus on ensuring the Divisions/Units across the Ministry work collaboratively to help, empower and transform the lives of our poor and vulnerable clients.

Minister Cox cuts the ribbon while Permanent Secretary, Lenor Baptiste-Simmons (L) and Deputy Permanent Secretary, Wendy Guy-Hernandez look on.

New 24-Hour Suicide Prevention Hotline now available



A new 24-Hour Suicide Prevention Hotline, 800 – COPE (2673), is now available from the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. This 24 hour Hotline which is confidential and free of charge to callers, is intended to efficiently support persons with crisis issues related to suicidal ideations, abuse and anxiety and help those in need of emotional support.



Social Development Ministry Distributes \$3.5M in Home Repair Grants

A total of Three million, four hundred and four thousand, seven hundred and ninety-seven dollars (\$3,404,797) in Home Repair Grants was distributed for Fiscal 2024 under the Ministry's National Social Development Programme (NSDP). Two hundred and twenty-four (224) applicants or eight hundred (800) persons, have benefitted from our Home Repair Grant Programme.



Minister Cox represents Trinidad and Tobago at the XVI Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Barbados, from October 30 - November 1, 2024

At the forum, the Minister shared that Trinidad and Tobago is poised for a promising future with the Integration of Adaptive Social Protection Systems to Support the Vulnerable.



Minister Cox with members of the Down Syndrome Family Network (DSFN) at the organization's annual conference

Social Development Ministry Launches 2024/2025 Parenting Workshops

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) launched its 2024/2025 edition of the National Parenting Programme. Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox stated, "Strengthening families is not just a moral imperative. It is a necessity for building a sustainable, prosperous future for Trinidad and Tobago." The Parenting Workshops were not only informative, but also served as a catalyst for positive change in the lives of families, and by extension, our nation.

Minister Cox with Representatives of the National Parent Teachers Association at the launch



Programme for Parents of Children with Disabilities

The Ministry officially launched its G.U.I.D.E Programme which embodies the principles of Growth, Understanding, Inclusion, Development and Empowerment for families of children with disabilities, as another significant step towards creating a society that removes the invisibility surrounding disability. Minister Cox urged stakeholders to collaborate with the Ministry so as to build accessible infrastructure, design inclusive curricula, and create opportunities for persons with disabilities.



Minister Cox (Center), Permanent Secretary (Ag), Ryan Ramcharan (L); Deputy Permanent Secretary, Vera Deonanan-Balkaran (R) and Disability Advocate, Sudhir Ramessar at the G.U.I.D.E Programme Launch

Pannist father and son duo Dane and Daniel Gulston provide a musical interlude at the Launch



Permanent Secretary, Lenor Baptiste-Simmons and Dep. Campus Principal, UWI, Prof. Derek Chadee after signing the MOU.

Social Development Ministry and the University of the West Indies establish Research Ethics Committee for the Social Sector

The Ministry and the University of the West Indies (UWI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at establishing a Research Ethics Committee (REC) for the Social Sector in Trinidad and Tobago. The creation of the REC is part of the broader efforts of the Inter-Ministerial Research Council (IMRC), which coordinates the national Social Research Agenda.

Seminar on Reproductive and Sexual Health for Women with Disabilities

The Ministry hosted a Seminar on Reproductive and Sexual Health for Women with Disabilities. Minister Cox conveyed to attendees that challenges faced by women with disabilities can heighten the risks of sexual exploitation, assault or abuse throughout their lives, as highlighted by the draft National Policy on Persons with Disabilities.



Minister Cox, Permanent Secretaries Lenor Baptiste-Simmons and Ryan Ramcharan, along with Ms. Penny Gomez from the Digicel Foundation after the signing.

Social Development Ministry and Digicel Foundation sign historic agreement

In keeping with its drive to provide equal access to opportunities and resources for persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services signed a historic agreement with the Digicel Trinidad and Tobago Foundation. This Agreement signals the partnership between the two entities in establishing a multidisciplinary centre in Trinidad and Tobago that will provide rehabilitative services to persons with disabilities.



National Family Services Director, Ms. Mary Bastien (Top Right) with attendees at the Seminar for Reproductive and Sexual Health for Women with Disabilities

Outreaches 2024

In 2024, the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services participated in 51 outreaches across Trinidad, reaffirming its commitment to reaching the population and disseminating vital information about available grants, services, and programmes.



Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association's "Walk for Sight" walkathon and Outreach.



Princes Town Community Day Outreach



San Fernando East Community Day Outreach



Morgua Secondary School Outreach



Diego Martin Borough Corporation's 1st Borough Day Outreach



Ministry of Public Administration's Public Service Day Expo

Spotlight on Centenarians



Joseph Woods - Age 100



Cecilia James - Age 102



Clifford Joseph - Age 100



Evdnie Gopaul - Age 100



Ivy Bailey - Age 100



Rifa Smyke - Age 110

Social Highlights



Minister Cox presents a special token of appreciation to one of the Ministry's Special Achievers, Mr. Timothy Watkins, 'The Baron'



Minister Cox presents Instruments of Appointment to two members who will serve as government representatives to the Board of the Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association (TTBWA)



MSDFS Staff participate in an Outreach in commemoration of World AIDS Day hosted by COM Talk International in collaboration with the Arima Borough Corporation



Minister Cox, who served as the event's patron, is presented with a bouquet from Artistic Director of Trinity Dance Theatre, Mr. Allan Balfour at the Trinity Dance Theatre 2024 production, Alpha