

# Strategic Plan 2014-2015

## Executive Summary



### A Letter from the Director

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services will work diligently over the next two years to create innovative, agency-wide approaches to serving Oklahomans in need. We created this strategic plan, a road map if you will, to guide our efforts. DHS will be "Growing in a New Direction" as we strive to create and maintain stronger Oklahomans, a stronger workforce, stronger communities and stronger practices.

I believe the dedicated, compassionate nature of our employees provides us with a foundation upon which to remake this agency into what we all want it to be. This plan creates a path for us as we work to engage stakeholders and employees and improve services to our clients.

We have to do things differently and perform better in order to regain the trust and respect of our clients and the people who care about the services we provide. This includes streamlining our processes, measuring our performance, and truly engaging and supporting our employees in these efforts.

We need to be clever about how we carry out our mission; however, we cannot do this work alone. We need strong partnerships and community involvement across the state. We need an engaged, satisfied and supported workforce. We need strong leadership within the agency and we need to continue building trust with our community partners, contract providers, clients and legislative leaders.

Our focus over the next two years will include: improving outcomes for clients, improving customer service and communication, partnering with key stakeholders to maximize our resources and effectiveness, strengthening and supporting our workforce, improving business processes, and increasing public awareness and accountability.

Many changes have taken place within this agency over the past 12 months, and more changes are ahead of us. We will work together in pursuing these goals and move forward in a new direction as a team. Restructuring within the agency provides us with unique opportunities and I believe this strategic plan allows us to capitalize on those opportunities.

#### Ed Lake

Director

Oklahoma Department  
of Human Services

Months of work have gone into the development of this strategic plan and feedback from stakeholders, partners, employees and legislative leaders has been incorporated into the many objectives. These are the things we need to start working on right away if we are going to get where we need to go. It will be a challenge, but I believe we can accomplish these goals together.

# GROWING in a NEW DIRECTION

## 2014-2015 Strategy Map

### OUR MISSION

We improve the quality of life of vulnerable Oklahomans by increasing people's ability to lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.

### OUR VISION

DHS provides help and offers hope to vulnerable Oklahomans through stronger practices, involved communities and a caring and engaged workforce.

### OUR VALUES

Compassion • Respect • Safety • Quality • Innovation



<p><b>Oklahomans lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.</b></p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the incidence of abuse, neglect and exploitation in Oklahoma</li> <li>• Reduce participation barriers for Oklahomans who are eligible to receive DHS services</li> <li>• Improve the well-being of Oklahomans</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our workforce is informed, supported and engaged.</b></p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and maintain a healthy work environment built on trust, respect and effective communication</li> <li>• Increase our work-related skills and knowledge</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to improve our physical, emotional and financial health</li> </ul>	<p><b>We are engaged with communities to meet the needs of vulnerable Oklahomans.</b></p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve communications with community partners and key stakeholders</li> <li>• Build and strengthen community partnerships to provide clients greater access to resources</li> </ul>	<p><b>We have a culture of continuous improvement.</b></p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of systematic process improvement projects, across the department, designed to improve and promote excellent service delivery and client satisfaction</li> <li>• Maintain a culture of accountability, including fiscal integrity, at all levels of the department</li> <li>• Increase the understanding and application of outcome-focused performance and evidence-based practices</li> </ul>
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# 1

## Oklahomans lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.

In order to improve client outcomes, we will continue to focus efforts on reducing abuse, neglect and exploitation in Oklahoma beginning with identifying all department activities that prevent or reduce abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. Subject matter experts will be responsible for identifying opportunities for improvement, developing partnerships, monitoring agency progress on outcomes associated with this goal, as well as developing an evaluation plan and indicators for all DHS prevention programs.

Following these guidelines, a coordinated, department-wide approach will focus on improving the well-being of Oklahomans and evaluating the effectiveness of DHS programs or projects that reduce poverty and/or improve well-being. Outcomes will be tracked and DHS will increase our knowledge, and the knowledge of communities, regarding individuals and families who live in poverty.

During the 2014 state fiscal year, we will begin an initiative to increase public awareness of the needs of citizens who have been impacted by abuse, neglect and/or exploitation and of prevention programs and services available through DHS. An evaluation plan will be created to measure the effectiveness of this campaign.

Additionally, we will engage in activities to reduce participation barriers for Oklahomans who are eligible to receive DHS services, including efforts to increase awareness and knowledge of DHS services, purpose and processes. We will strive to increase clients' ability to understand DHS policy and procedures by revising, as necessary, any complicated or difficult-to-understand policies and procedures. As a part of reducing barriers for participation, we want to learn more about why some Oklahomans, although eligible, choose not to receive DHS services on a temporary basis, which could improve their self-sufficiency in the long term.

# 2

## Our workforce is informed, supported and engaged.

During the past 12 months, we have listened carefully to our employees and their needs. Over the next couple of years, we will be working on addressing those needs so that our employees are appropriately supported and valued, and are equipped to address the needs of our clients. We will focus on the health of our work environments and work to increase trust, respect and effective communication at all levels of the department.

We intend to increase employee retention and will engage in several initiatives along those lines, including soliciting feedback from employees who are leaving the agency, to better understand how we can keep good employees. We will work to improve

career opportunities internally and conduct employee engagement initiatives. We will also develop and implement comprehensive leadership training for managers and internal communication strategies for each division.

We understand that work-related skills and knowledge are of utmost importance and will work to better meet training needs, evaluate training effectiveness and develop a mentoring program for employees. We will increase opportunities for employees to improve their physical, emotional and financial health. Additionally, our department will become a certified Healthy Oklahoma Business by June 2015.

## **We are engaged with communities to meet the needs of Oklahomans.**

We cannot do this work alone. It is imperative that we continue to maximize services and support from community partners. We are, after all, working toward many of the same goals. In order to do our best as partners, we will work to improve the quality and frequency of communication with partners and stakeholders. This includes developing an internal directory of existing community partners and resources since we know that community partners often work

with multiple divisions within our department.

We will build and strengthen a network of community partnerships that will help us ensure greater access to resources for clients, including skill development and employment opportunities. DHS will also provide personal financial management education options to service recipients if they desire such education.

## **We have a culture of continuous improvement.**

Over the next two years, we will strive to create a culture that embraces and supports continuous improvement. This includes ensuring that best practices are used and processes are as efficient as they can be. We will enhance our department-wide customer service initiative and work to increase awareness of customer service needs and expectations.

We will hold each other, the department and our partners accountable and conduct our

work with the utmost integrity. We will work to ensure that funds are being used wisely and appropriate priority is given for funding requests. Performance will be outcome-focused and we will strive to use evidence-based practices at all levels of the department. In order to accomplish these performance goals, all divisions will develop strategic plans that are in alignment with the department-level strategic plan and outcome measurements that will evaluate all efforts.

