

Strategic Plan SFY 2014-2015

Oklahoma Department of Human Services



Child Welfare Services

GROWING in a NEW DIRECTION

SFY 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>Oklahomans lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the incidence of abuse, neglect and exploitation in Oklahoma• Reduce participation barriers for Oklahomans who are eligible to receive DHS services• Improve the well-being of Oklahomans	<p>Our workforce is informed, supported and engaged.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create and maintain a healthy work environment built on trust, respect and effective communication• Increase our work-related skills and knowledge• Provide opportunities to improve our physical, emotional and financial health	<p>We are engaged with communities to meet the needs of vulnerable Oklahomans.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve communications with community partners and key stakeholders• Build and strengthen community partnerships to provide clients greater access to resources	<p>We have a culture of continuous improvement.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the number of systematic process improvement projects, across the department, designed to improve and promote excellent service delivery and client satisfaction• Maintain a culture of accountability, including fiscal integrity, at all levels of the department• Increase the understanding and application of outcome-focused performance and evidence-based practices
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Figure 1. SFY 2014-2015 Strategy Map



A Letter from the CWS Director

Marian Wright Edelman said, "If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much."

There is no greater purpose than ensuring the safe futures of abused and neglected children. The Marian Wright Edelman quote was selected for the Pinnacle Plan for the powerful way it communicates the critical role of advocating for children. It reflects the mission of Oklahoma's child welfare professionals to stand up for children in harm's way. Each day, under the most difficult circumstances, child welfare professionals work to keep families together when safely possible. When this is not possible, they search for relatives and resource parents to support children and families so reunification can happen. When reunification is not possible, they work to place children with families where they can lead safe, healthy lives and maintain connections to their kin, culture and community. The work in child welfare has always been difficult and complex. Oklahoma's child welfare system has been challenged to do it better.

Years one and two of the Pinnacle Plan brought successes and challenges, but Child Welfare staff handled the years with grace, pride and commitment. Our goal is that our clients, their families, our staff and our community partners feel valued and respected, and know they are listened to, while we also protect and serve vulnerable children and their families.

Let's remember the best parts of the past, but focus on moving forward toward new and more effective ways of accomplishing our goals. I look forward to changing with you to better serve our clients and communities.

Deborah Smith
Director
Child Welfare Services

OUTCOME 1: Oklahomans lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.

Goal 1: We will reduce the incidence of abuse, neglect and exploitation in Oklahoma.

Objective 1: We will increase the number of children who remain safely in their own homes through the provision of Family Centered Services by June 2015.

Action Plan:

By February 2014, we will apply for an IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project that would allow more flexibility in the use of federal funds to keep children safely in their own homes.

By March 2014, we will partner with a national expert to conduct a case review to better understand practice strengths and areas for improvement in safety planning and engagement.

By June 2014, we will increase the number of workers dedicated to Family Centered Services by 50 statewide and the number of supervisors by 10 statewide.

In June 2014, we will improve safety planning through enhanced policy and curriculum followed by training and support in the field. This will include new curriculum and training materials and will begin with training at the annual supervisors' conference.

Important Results:

- The increased number of children remaining in their own homes through safety planning and in-home services
- The increased knowledge of staff regarding safety planning and engagement of families
- The increased number of staff trained with enhanced safety training curriculum

OUTCOME 1: Oklahomans lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.

Goal 2: We will reduce participation barriers for Oklahomans who are eligible to receive DHS services.

Objective 1: We will develop a better understanding of why eligible youth do not participate in services and enhance the Independent Living program based on youth feedback by June 2015.

Action Plan:

By September 2014, we will conduct a survey of youth 16-18 years old in custody, child welfare specialists, and other key stakeholders to discover barriers to participation in independent living services.

By January 2015, we will conduct focus groups with youth alumni to better understand their perspective and to hear suggestions for improvement.

Important Results:

- The increase percentage of youth participating in independent living services
- The improve educational, housing and employment outcomes for custody youth

OUTCOME 1: Oklahomans lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.

Goal 3: We will improve the well-being of Oklahomans.

Objective 1: We will strengthen the partnership between DHS and Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) in order to improve educational outcomes for children in foster care by June 2015.

Action Plan:

By May 2014, the Department of Human Services and the Oklahoma State Department of Education will complete a joint strategic plan focused on improving outcomes for children and youth in foster care.

By October 2014, we will cross-train school personnel, court personnel and Child Welfare staff to better understand educational goals and advocacy for children in foster care.

By October 2014, we will finalize updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and data sharing agreement between the two agencies.

By October 2014, we will define two-to-three primary data measures that will guide planning and focus the partnership.

Important Results:

- The increased knowledge of school personnel, foster parents and Child Welfare staff about shared goals and educational advocacy
- Through formalized data-sharing agreements, improve tracking between the two systems, which will lead to improved outcomes

OUTCOME 2: Our workforce is informed, supported and engaged.

Goal 1: We will create and maintain a healthy work environment built on trust, respect and effective communication.

Objective 1: CWS Leadership will conduct annual CWS Summits with front-line workers and supervisors throughout the state providing an opportunity for updates on child welfare reform and feedback from staff about challenges, successes and suggestions by December 2014.

Action Plan:

By March of each year, we will schedule all workers, supervisors and program staff to attend at least one session during the calendar year.

By December 2014, we will use the information to modify, enhance and eliminate strategies based on feedback from front-line staff.

Important Results:

- Staff report improved two-way communication
- Staff report an improved perception of Child Welfare Services communication efforts

OUTCOME 2: Our workforce is informed, supported and engaged.

Goal 2: We will increase our work-related skills and knowledge.

Objective 1: We will reduce turnover and continue to improve the experience level and practice competencies of staff responsible for the day-to-day work on child welfare cases by July 2015.

Action Plan:

By September 2013, we will create a field-training and mentoring program for new child welfare specialists.

By November 2013, we will revise training curricula and training process for mentors.

By February 2014, more than 100 mentors will be certified to work directly with the new workers through the field-training program.

Beginning September 2014, new child welfare specialists will work through the Field Training Program after successful completion of new worker CORE Academy and Hands on Testing (HOT).

Beginning April 2015, we will create an evaluation tool to report results of the mentoring program.*

Important Results:

- The increased understanding of what a mentoring program needs to address for staff
- The number of mentors trained
- Mentors report increased knowledge of how to appropriately mentor a coworker based on training provided
- The decrease turnover rate of new workers
- New workers report being better prepared to accept full caseload

* Where an evaluation plan will be created, we anticipate additional Important Results to be added.

OUTCOME 2: Our workforce is informed, supported and engaged.

Goal 2: We will increase our work-related skills and knowledge.

Objective 2: We will implement certification requirements for all levels of child welfare specialists that are achievable for staff and tied to development and career progression beginning September 2013.

Action Plan:

Beginning September 2013, preliminary certification program will be created for child welfare workers and supervisors.

By January 2014, child welfare supervisors will complete preliminary certification.

By January 2014, child welfare specialist III's will complete preliminary certification.

Important Results:

- The increased understanding of practice competencies required at each level
- Improved practice competencies of staff
- Number of staff certified
- Staff report a greater level of confidence in skill level and ability to engage in work successfully
- The increased number of individualized development plans for staff
- The decreased turnover rate of staff at all levels

OUTCOME 3: We are engaged with communities to meet the needs of vulnerable Oklahomans.

Goal 1: We will improve communications with community partners and key stakeholders.

Objective 1: We will enhance our regional partnerships with tribes by facilitating and supporting regional tribal and state workgroups by December 2014.

Action Plan:

By March 2014, we will create tribal coordinators for each region in the state.

By December 2014, we will continue tribal/state workgroups co-facilitated with tribal partners.

By June 2014, we will improve hotline procedures for early identification of Native American children.

By June 2015, we will continue case reviews throughout the state focused on ICWA compliance.

Important Results:

- Improved early identification and notification of tribe when Native American children are alleged to be abused or neglected
- Improved permanency and well-being outcomes for children, including Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) compliant outcomes

OUTCOME 3: We are engaged with communities to meet the needs of vulnerable Oklahomans.

Goal 2: We will build and strengthen community partnerships that ensures improved services to children in foster care.

Objective 1: We will work closely with community partners to improve support to children in foster care and those who care for them by June 2015.

Action Plan:

By June 2014, we will closely coordinate recruitment goals and strategies with faith-based community and other foster care partners.

By July 2014, we will collaborate with Count Me in 4 KIDS to support children in foster care and those who care for them.

By January 2015, we will utilize data regarding placement needs of children and specialized training regarding targeted recruitment for DHS and agency partners in order to create a system of experts in targeted recruitment.

By January 2015, we will partner with 111 Project to craft a specific focus for Child Welfare's participation in the group.

By June 2015, we will increase the number of communities supported by the Child Welfare Partnership Collaborative Boards to include three additional counties.

By June 2015, we will support the Resource Family Partners in recruiting for Bridge resource families through the use of social media and general recruitment methods of public service announcements.

Important Results:

- Increase in approved foster and adoptive families
- Increase satisfaction of current foster and adoptive families with support received
- Improved placement stability

OUTCOME 4: We have a culture of continuous improvement.

Goal 1: We will continue to promote systematic process improvement initiatives designed to improve and promote DHS service delivery excellence and client satisfaction.

Objective 1: We will develop enhanced Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes and embed key learning organization principles within the division that lead to effectively measuring the quality of work, informing leadership of what is and is not working in the system, and improves key performance areas beginning July 2013.

Action Plan:

By April 2014, we will provide training related to key principles of CQI to leadership in first of five pilot sites.

By May 2014, we will implement a newly developed CQI plan in first five pilot sites.

By July 2014, we will develop training plan to spread CQI learning to the remainder of the CWS leadership team.

Beginning July 2014, we will test, evaluate, and revise CQI processes as CQI plan is implemented in pilot sites to enhance the quality of the system.

Important Results:

- Improved knowledge of what is working and not working within the system
- The increased number of leaders who embrace CQI as a management philosophy
- Team members report that strengths are leveraged and recognized
- Increased awareness at all levels of the value of continuous learning and a focus on strengthening practice to improve outcomes

- Strong relationships between field and program staff will be evident at all levels of the organization
- Continuous learning results in action planning that involves key stakeholders
- Collective responsibility for action planning, follow-through and measurement of outcomes is evident at all levels of the system
- Improved accuracy of Level of Care determinations
- Improved timeliness of Level of Care determinations
- Reduced staff work time for processing

OUTCOME 4: We have a culture of continuous improvement.

Goal 3: We will increase the understanding and application of outcome-focused performance and evidence-based practices.

Objective 1: We will increase the performance awareness of Child Welfare Services and ensure that goals and objectives are aligned with the department-level strategic plan by July 2015.

Action Plan:

By July 2014, we will create a finalized plan with Child Welfare Services objectives, action plans and important results that is fully aligned with DHS goals.

By July 2014, we will align the division goals with initiatives and strategies included in the Pinnacle Plan and the Child and Family Services Plan.

Beginning July 2014, we will work Design Services to produce and distribute the final Child Welfare Services Strategic Plan.

Beginning July 2014, all designated management and leadership will attend outcome-based performance training.

By June 2015, we will create an outcome-focused work environment at all levels of Child Welfare Services.

Important Results:

- The number and percentage of designated management and leadership attending outcome-based performance training
- Staff report an increased understanding of how work performed impacts safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families



Child Welfare Services

