



Strategic Plan

SFY 2017-2018



**Adult and Family
Services**

DHS STRATEGY MAP

SFY 2017-2018

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

Safety • Integrity • Professionalism • Compassion



<p>We help Oklahomans who are vulnerable lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the well-being of the people we serve • Improve access to our services and benefits 	<p>Our workforce is informed, supported and engaged.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote safe, healthy work environments • Improve the effectiveness of our workforce • Continue to improve employee engagement 	<p>We are engaged with communities to meet the needs of Oklahomans who are vulnerable.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and strengthen community partnerships • Help Oklahomans who are vulnerable access community resources 	<p>We have a culture of continuous improvement.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve the department's effectiveness, efficiency and accountability • Continue to evaluate the impact our services and benefits have on Oklahomans who are vulnerable
--	--	--	---

Figure 1. SFY 2017-2018 Strategy Map

A Letter from the AFS Director

The Adult and Family Services (AFS) strategic plan was designed to support the Oklahoma Department of Human Services' strategies and guide the singular work of our division and agency in serving Oklahomans at risk or in need. The objectives established for SFY 2017 and 2018 were developed by our county directors and will be implemented at both the state and local level.

AFS continues to focus on positive outcomes for our customers and clients with a combination of open and empathetic communication, uncomplicated rules and practical business processes. Aware of the complex needs of our clients, AFS has set a formal expectation that our staff routinely make all appropriate referrals for housing, mental health, financial services, and other programs and services offered by other DHS divisions and/or community organizations.

More than ever, decisions must be grounded in information, pragmatism and imagination to effectively maintain that focus. For example, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is being redesigned to eliminate the need for applicants to queue up in a county office twice a year. The application process will be easier for clients while offices are asked to commit fewer resources to managing the program, improving customer service while saving money.

AFS becomes stronger through setting objectives and creating measurable steps to improve from within. In addition to meeting the needs of the people we serve, we have a duty to the public to account for our efficient use of available state resources. To this end, we will continue to focus on Quality Service and reporting outcomes, the results we achieve. AFS has successfully used Lean Six Sigma projects to refine service delivery and program administration across the division. An analysis of eligibility denials has led to a concentrated focus on best practices to prevent applications from being unnecessarily denied. This effort has the potential of eliminating wasteful rework and improving program access, both of which impact our national performance measures.

We will also be focusing on our employees by implementing strategies to enhance engagement, partnerships and the skills of our workforce. We will continue to provide opportunities to listen to staff and use staff feedback to put needed supports and training in place. I believe competence builds confidence, which in turn supports commitment. Our web-based, on-demand knowledge base, Quest, continues to expand its content and our new plain language "policy workbook" will debut this year. Both tools are intended to make rules easier to understand and instructions easier to follow for both our staff and our customers.

I look forward to AFS continuing to deliver quality service every day while never losing touch with our impact on the lives of our clients and communities. As we all know, challenges do and will come, and we will tackle these challenges head-on and identify the opportunities within.

I am confident in your continued dedication to our work and support of one another; we can accomplish the objectives set forth in this document together while at the same time delivering core services to meet the needs of Oklahomans who are vulnerable. There is evidence of this every day.

Sincerely,

Jim Struby

Director, Adult and Family Services

DIVISION OVERVIEW

AFS staff administers state and federal social safety net programs to help stabilize families in crisis and assist low-income Oklahomans with meeting their most basic needs. AFS programs include: Child Care Subsidy, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), SoonerCare (Medicaid) eligibility for the aged, blind and disabled population, State Supplemental Payment (SSP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

AFS programs are designed to deliberately focus on supporting self-sufficiency with the understanding that every individual has the right and privilege to improve themselves. Families turn to the Department of Human Services when crises occur, such as when a family member loses a job, parents split up, or someone in the family develops health problems. Working families living in poverty also turn to DHS to access benefits to help make ends meet when household income is insufficient to meet food expenses for the entire month, the family is unable to pay for the full cost of child care, or needs help with utility costs. When individuals' and families' basic needs are met and financial stressors are reduced, they are less likely to access Child Welfare or Adult Protective Services and more likely to maintain employment.

The **Child Care Subsidy Program** helps low-income parents pay for child care, which allows them to work and/or complete their education or training. By helping low-income parents pay for high-quality child care services, fewer children will be left home alone or in unsafe or unreliable care situations. When child care arrangements break down, low-income parents are less productive at work and need to take off more often. Young children attending high-quality licensed facilities focused on providing early learning activities are more likely to be school-ready than children left alone or with someone not providing such activities.

The **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** provides winter heating, energy crisis and summer cooling assistance to eligible low-income households during specific application periods throughout each year.

The Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) and DHS share **Medicaid eligibility determination** to ensure underserved and vulnerable populations have access to health care. AFS staff is responsible for determining Medicaid eligibility for the aged, blind and disabled populations, including those residing in long-term care facilities. OHCA takes applications and determines eligibility for pregnant women and families with children through an online enrollment process.

The **State Supplemental Payment (SSP)** program provides a small cash payment for eligible aged, blind and disabled persons. By federal law, Medicaid for this population and the requisite money payment cannot be separated. The maximum SSP payment is \$41. While small, this money payment may mean the difference in an elderly or disabled person being able to pay for utilities or household items not covered by SNAP food benefits.

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** ensures individuals and families in need are better able to meet their nutritional needs. Households use an Access Oklahoma electronic benefit card at one of 3,322 participating retail grocery stores and farmers markets in Oklahoma. SNAP food benefits allow families to spend less of their income on food so they have more money available to pay their housing, utility and transportation costs. Low-income families receiving SNAP food benefits are less likely to experience food insecurity. Adults and children with enough to eat are more likely to be productive at work and succeed in school and less likely to succumb to illness due to malnutrition.

The **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** program is a time-limited cash assistance program focused on helping the recipients become more economically independent through job skills training and education services.

Many states do not combine all of the AFS programs into one agency, which requires clients to navigate different systems to access services they are eligible to receive. In Oklahoma, DHS provides comprehensive services for families, which cuts down on administrative costs and provides clients with one-stop service.

County offices

AFS serves Oklahomans statewide through a network of local offices and staff in nearly all 77 counties. Individuals and families may access AFS services and benefits by contacting a DHS office by phone or in person. We strive to serve individuals as quickly as possible. Clients may also access services by applying for or renewing benefits online. Depending on the situation, the individual may be interviewed that day or county staff will schedule a telephone or office interview within 10 calendar days.

Online services

AFS launched an online benefit renewal website in 2012 called OKDHSLive! to enable low-income working families to renew ongoing benefits online through okdhslive.org at a time convenient for them and their work schedules. Clients needing help to complete an online renewal are able to call the statewide customer service center at 1-877-653-4798 for assistance. After submission, DHS staff conducts a scheduled telephone interview, when required, with the client before completing the renewal.

Support centers

AFS has three regional support centers in Oklahoma City, Muskogee and Tulsa. By diverting benefit renewal processes from county offices, county office staff are able to conduct face-to-face interviews with initial applicants and families in crisis situations.

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

Goal 1: We will improve the well-being of the people we serve.

Objective 1: We will educate clients about available DHS and community services that increase well-being.

Action Plan:

By July 2017, we will make appropriate referrals for housing, mental health, financial services, and other programs and services offered by other DHS divisions and/or community organizations.

By July 2017, we will add information to the Internet, including OKDHSLive!, to inform clients and customers of available community services.

Important Results:

- The increased percentage of clients report that the assistance they receive from DHS frees up money to pay other bills like rent, utilities, medicine or non-food items
- The increased percentage of clients report that receiving benefits from DHS lessens any stress they may feel
- The increased percentage of clients report that receiving assistance from DHS makes a positive difference in their lives
- The increased percentage of clients report that the services they receive from DHS help improve family stability

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

Goal 2: We will improve access to our services and benefits.

Objective 1: Beginning January 2017, we will reduce the need for people to physically visit DHS offices by modifying OKDHSLive! to accept applications from individuals who have never received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Action Plan:

By July 2016, we will develop a business case for OKDHSLive! and data system modifications.

By August 2016, we will gain DHS Information Technology Governance Board approval for the business plan.

By October 2016, we will begin development of system improvements.

By May 2017, we will implement improvement modifications to OKDHSLive!

Beginning June 2017, we will promote the use of OKDHSLive! to new clients (not known to the agency) interested in applying for SNAP benefits for the first time.

Important Results:

- The increased number of SNAP applications received through OKDHSLive!
- The increased percentage of applications received through OKDHSLive! compared to applications received via paper in county offices
- The improved access to services for new clients interested in applying for SNAP benefits
- The increased percentage of clients report that the website was easy to navigate

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

Goal 1: We will promote safe, healthy work environments.

Objective 1: We will decrease workplace incidents by 5% by improving employees' safety awareness and knowledge by July 2017.

Action Plan:

Beginning July 2016, we will ensure all employees are trained annually on workplace emergency and non-emergency procedures, including identifying emergencies and how to respond.

Beginning July 2016, we will distribute quarterly safety tips through the AFS newsletter.

By September 2016, we will promote available tools for measuring workplace incidents.

Beginning October 2016, we will train staff to identify and report safety hazards to appropriate personnel in an effort to reduce workplace incidents.

Beginning October 2016, safety coordinators and local safety committees will ensure training is completed.

Important Results:

- The reduced number of annual workplace incidents
- The increased percentage of workplace incidents that occur and are reported in a timely manner to Risk Management
- The increased knowledge of staff regarding how to identify and respond to emergencies and safety hazards
- The increased percentage of staff who report that staff respond to safety alerts according to protocol
- The increased percentage of employees who report that team members show concern for the safety of colleagues and clients when necessary

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

Goal 2: We will improve the effectiveness of our workforce.

Objective 1: We will increase the use of available tools and training to improve staff skills, productivity and independence by June 2017.

Action Plan:

By August 2016, we will obtain baseline measurements of current Quest usage, including categories for programs, leadership and Quality Service.

By August 2016, we will examine baseline measurements of documented Gemba walks in order to identify areas for improvement.

By December 2016, we will develop a plan to transfer knowledge of LeadUP participants to peers and subordinates.

By February 2017, we will create a plan to evaluate training effectiveness for all AFS training modules.

By June 2017, we will update and implement a 360 Evaluation for AFS county directors.

By June 2018, we will continue to train AFS managers through LeadUp or other comprehensive leadership training.

Important Results:

- The increased usage of Quest overall and specifically for the categories of programs, leadership and Quality Service
- The increased use of Lync as a training, meeting and communication tool among management teams
- The increased documentation of completed Gemba walks
- The increased peer-to-peer sharing of knowledge gained in LeadUp
- The increased awareness of opportunities for improvement among AFS leadership
- The increased percentage of employees who report having gained knowledge after receiving AFS program-specific training

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

Goal 3: We will continue to improve employee engagement.

Objective 1: We will improve communication between leadership and staff by June 2018.

Action Plan:

Beginning July 2016, local AFS leadership will implement monthly informational meetings with staff in either large or small settings.

Beginning July 2016, local AFS leadership will schedule and participate in meetings at least quarterly for peer-to-peer sharing of ideas.

Important Results:

- Increase the percentage of staff report there are adequate opportunities for two-way communication between leadership and front-line staff within AFS
- Increase the percentage of staff report that the quality of communication between leadership and front-line staff has improved greatly
- Increase the percentage of the division's employees who report being very engaged at work
- Increase the percentage of the division's employees who report that they are satisfied with their jobs

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

Goal 3: We will continue to improve employee engagement.

Objective 2: Leadership will strive to further engage and develop staff beginning July 2016.

Action Plan:

Beginning July 2016, we will identify opportunities for staff to participate in activities outside of normally assigned tasks to promote professional growth.

By June 2018, we will ensure that supervisors know how to maximize coaching practices with their subordinates.

Important Results:

- The increased percentage of the division's employees who report that personal development is encouraged by their supervisor
- The increased percentage of employees report improvement in Collaborative Coaching and monthly conference sessions with supervisors

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

Goal 1: We will build and strengthen community partnerships.

Objective 1: We will communicate with community partners to assess services provided to our shared clients and identify areas that may be improved by enhanced collaboration beginning July 2016.

Action Plan:

Beginning July 2016, county representatives will contact local partners to learn about their services and support needs, as well as their perspective on previous DHS support, if any.

Beginning July 2016, we will contact regional and statewide partners to learn about their services, support needs and perspective on previous DHS support.

By September 2016, we will evaluate information gathered from partner meetings, and use it to identify gaps and overlaps as well as opportunities for improvements in service, making it as seamless as possible by using the resources of both DHS and those of our partners. We will also assess the time that DHS is currently spending in supporting this partner.

By October 2016, we will develop a method of tracking and evaluating the benefits realized by DHS collaboration with our partners and use it to assess the cost/time benefit and improve the process.

By December 2016, we will develop a community partner and stakeholder communications plan that outlines the role of the county director.

Important Results:

- The reduced service gaps for targeted populations based on enhanced collaboration
- The increased access to community resources for AFS service recipients
- The improved partnerships at the local county level
- The increased number of AFS supervisors report being comfortable working with local civic organizations, community groups and faith groups that serve DHS clients

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

Goal 2: We will help Oklahomans who are vulnerable access community resources.

Objective 1: We will improve self-sufficiency and access to community resources for vulnerable Oklahomans by educating them about services available in their community by August 2017.

Action Plan:

By August 2016, we will establish how the information regarding services to clients will be delivered.

By November 2016, we will utilize an electronic system for delivery of brochures to community partners.

By June 2017, we will develop an evaluation plan to measure the effectiveness of the tool to share information with the Office of Community and Faith Engagement.

By July 2017, we will provide information to AFS clients regarding where to seek assistance for housing, mental health and financial services within their communities.

By August 2017, we will conduct a quarterly survey of community partners from designated referral sources and document results.

Important Results:

- The increased number of clients receiving services from community partners
- The increased number of community engagement activities where materials are distributed
- The increased knowledge of staff about accessing community resources

OUTCOME 4: We have a culture of continuous improvement.

Goal 1: We will continue to improve the department's effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

Objective 1: We will standardize county office procedures to maximize client usage of OKDHSLive! by June 2017.

Action Plan:

By December 2016, we will gather statistics on usage of OKDHSLive! in county offices and the community.

By March 2017, we will identify reasons why clients might choose not to use OKDHSLive! and better understand barriers for increased use.

Beginning July 2017, we will equip and educate staff on client usage of OKDHSLive! and establish targeted goals for usage.

Important Results:

- The increased knowledge regarding barriers to OKDHSLive! use
- The increased use of OKDHSLive!
- The increased numbers of points of access to benefits and services in the community
- The increased percentage of clients that report they use OKDHSLive! unassisted

OUTCOME 4: We have a culture of continuous improvement.

Goal 2: We will continue to evaluate the impact our services and benefits have on Oklahomans who are vulnerable.

Objective 1: We will communicate to the public, upon request or as needed, the benefit of AFS programs and the outcomes we achieve beginning July 2016.

Action Plan:

Beginning December 2016, we will gather statistics regarding the populations we serve, types of benefits received, value of benefits to families, and review county and state fact sheets to prepare for community presentations.

By July 2017, we will communicate the barriers that prevent families from being self-sufficient.

By July 2017, we will communicate common misconceptions and ideologies of the general public concerning the families we serve and the Department of Human Services.

By July 2017, we will examine the relationship between employment, underemployment and unemployment on SNAP participation rates and food insecurity.

By July 2017, we will communicate with other service providers about any population for which DHS services were reduced or eliminated.

By July 2017, we will continue to obtain client feedback on the benefit of services.

Important Results:

- The increased experience with articulating the benefits and outcomes of AFS programs
- The increased understanding of available data regarding AFS clients and the impact of AFS programs

S16026DHS

Issued 7/2016

This publication is authorized by Oklahoma Department of Human Services Director Ed Lake and printed by DHS in accordance with state and federal regulations at a cost of \$16.65 for 43 copies. Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.