

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Human Services

Mission and Governance Statement

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) improves the quality of life of vulnerable Oklahomans by increasing people's ability to lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.

CORE MISSION:

To serve and protect Oklahomans who are vulnerable because of age, disability, or poverty from issues such as abuse, neglect, exploitation, and the effects of extreme poverty.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Ed Lake, Director

GOVERNANCE:

The Governor shall have the power and duty to select a Director of Human Services who shall serve as executive and administrative officer of the Department of Human Services. The Director shall be appointed wholly on the basis of ability, training and experience qualifying him or her for public welfare administration.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Director shall serve, subject to the confirmation of the Senate, at the pleasure of the Governor.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

What steps has the agency taken to cut costs and/or eliminate waste?

- Expanded preventive and family support programs in Child Welfare Services to improve outcomes for children and families in a safe and cost effective manner;
- Reduced licensing requirements for child care centers by combining and clarifying rules;
- Continued technical assistance from consulting group, improving the SNAP accuracy rate by correcting and/or refining policy, procedure and processes;
- Reduced state dollar commitment for LIHEAP program;
- Reduced cost of employee mileage reimbursement by funding centralized fleet management program to more effectively use state agency vehicles, and increased use of Microsoft Lync and teleconferences for trainings and meetings;
- Reduced printer costs by reducing printer deployment across the state and reduced telephone costs through internal audit of un-used lines and cellular telephones;
- Centralized funding for information technology projects and for building repair and renovation so that all projects are considered against equal criteria and the highest priority projects are expedited;

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- Increased use of workspace alternatives to maximize available office space and resources;
- Consolidated a number of administrative functions, such as contracting, timekeeping, human resources and communications, into a single division or unit which allowed the agency to reduce the total number of administrative support personnel;
- Consolidated and closed 24 offices which generated cost-savings related to building rent and energy savings; and
- Decreased agency energy usage and obtained energy Star Certification at 4 agency locations thus hitting our 20% decrease prior to year 2020. In 2015 the Department of Human Services achieved a 47% decrease with a continuing decrease in 2016.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Achieved significant improvement in Child Welfare caseloads and progress on worker turnover which is vitally important in achieving safety, permanency, and well-being for children, and stabilizing the workforce;
- Successfully closed one of two state operated children's shelters and progressing towards closing another, emphasizing the practice value that every child deserves a family;
- Successfully certified over 1000 new foster family homes for children in out-of-home care;
- Improved quality assurance within the senior nutrition program and expanded the use of nutrition counseling;
- Collaborated with OMES/Office of Business Quality to create a new federal reporting tracking system for the FTA 5310 Transportation Program;
- The *Oklahoma Sixty-Plus Legal Aid Services Helpline (OK-SPLASH)* grant engaged key aging stakeholders to build a cost-effective legal delivery system by assessing Oklahoma seniors' legal needs and the state's capacity to meet these needs, developing the infra-structure for a statewide 1-855 legal "hotline" number for seniors, and implementing a web-presence with a "live chat" function with attorneys and paralegals.
- Expansion of and mobilization of OKDHS Live!, the online system to apply for and renew certain assistance services;
- AFS is in its fifth year of utilizing the "Bridges out of Poverty" curriculum and strategies to educate communities about the issues faced by individuals living in poverty;
- Implementation of National Voter Registration Act process improvement statewide;
- Revising child care subsidy rules to implement provisions included in reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant that promote healthy child development and school success by encouraging continuity of care and stability in child care placement;
- Increased professional development opportunities for child care providers in the areas of physical activity, homelessness, and working with children with challenging behaviors;
- Developed a self-assessment tool for child care programs to set and evaluate goals;

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- Developed an expulsion policy to support children's healthy development and continuity of child care;
- Increased the use of person-centered planning for DDS service recipients resulting in enhanced quality of life;
- Streamlined the DDS service authorization process resulting in providers receiving authorizations 4 days quicker;
- Improved the design of the existing DDS incident management system to ensure identification of all critical incidents and follow up resulting in an increase in timely follow up and improved health and well-being for DDS service recipients;
- Implemented Quality Standards initiative throughout the agency;
- Centralized distribution of all benefit cards (issuance and replacement) with the Electronic Payment System Unit, freeing up Adult and Family Services staff at local offices to focus on other responsibilities within that division; and
- Established a single agency vacancy pool, allowing the agency to centrally monitor, plan and coordinate filling of positions based upon need and availability of funding.

PRIVATE SECTOR ALTERNATIVES:

Are any of the services which are performed by the agency also performed in the private sector in Oklahoma? In other states? Has the agency been approached by any foundation, for-profit or not-for-profit corporation with efforts to privatize some of the functions of the agency?

Adult and Family Services

Numerous private and public agencies have expressed interest in determining Medicaid eligibility but each group is interested only in distinct subsets of the Medicaid population. One of the major barriers to this is building a computer system that feeds eligibility into the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) which federal law requires be with one entity in the state (DHS in Oklahoma). There are numerous private and public entities that provide the same case management services DHS does for the Medicaid population; for example Area-wide Aging, Community Action Program, OSDH, and Head Start.

Child Support Services

DHS has been approached by private vendors and non-profits who seek to run some portion of our operations from time-to-time and evaluations are made on a case-by-case basis to such proposals. CSS has, in many instances, found cost effective alternatives to privatization. In nine offices, services are provided by district attorney staff through a contractual arrangement, and one CSS local office is operated by a community action program. We work through cooperative arrangements with the OU Center for Public Management to run some of the CSS special projects, such as the statewide call centers for customers and their employers, and private vendors operate some other specialized projects such as the DHS State Disbursement Unit. The limitations federal law places upon the ability of private vendors to access enforcement remedies and information under the Social Security Act are always a concern when considering contractual arrangements instead of using regular state resources. There are also sovereign tribal nations located in Oklahoma that provide child support services under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. CSS works with these tribal IV-D programs to ensure no duplication of effort.

Child Welfare Services

Public and private partnerships are being expanded to support children and families involved with the child welfare system. Collaboration with the DHS office supporting community and faith engagement and other external partners, CWS will finalize a two-year strategic plan focused on recruitment and support of resource families. The 111 Project and Count Me In 4 Kids have been implemented with the Office of Community and Faith Engagement (OCFE). Submissions from private agencies have been received in response to a DHS request for proposal for partnerships in recruitment, retention and support for non-relative resource parents and treatment foster homes. The awards for the resource family partners were realized in 2013. Targets for the recruitment of new foster homes are negotiated with the child welfare experts monitoring the Oklahoma Pinnacle Plan. There has been a recent surge in the number of new foster homes through this partnership. Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) is partnering with DHS to increase the number of children involved in child welfare services who are also served through mental health Systems of Care (SOC). Beginning in 2013, this partnership focused on counties in the southwest region of the state. Recent data show improvement in stabilizing some out-of-home placements and using SOC to work with older youth in need of supportive connections while in out-of-home care.

Developmental Disabilities Services

Private for-profit and not-for-profit agencies currently provide all of DDS's direct client services in community settings.