

Position Statement

For 2024 Session

MACSSA has an organizational priority of “Strategic Position Development” with the goal of addressing challenges and leading innovation through thoughtful analysis that incorporates fiscal implications, systemic policy concerns, and legislative strategies in the development of policy and legislative positions.

Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Proposal

Issue:

Establishment of a Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). The Minnesota 2023 legislature authorized the establishment of DCYF, with a transition beginning in summer of 2023, with a transition team housed at MMB guiding the work over 18 months. Programs and services previously within the Children and Family Services Division at DHS and a select number of programs within the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) will begin transferring on July 1, 2024 – with all programs anticipated to transfer by July 1, 2025.

The stated goals of the creation of DCYF include:

- Align outcomes and policy and pursue equity for children, youth, and families across state government.
- Elevate the priorities and funding needs of children, youth, and families.
- Focus local partners on improving the front door for services, with a goal to ease access and navigation for families and improve service.
- Sharpen the focus of state agencies to best address issues central to the people they serve.

The complexity of the work requires reimagining the concept of partnership between intergovernmental entities - state, county and tribes with the goal of fostering a relationship that collaboratively supports decision making, policy implementation and addressing ongoing challenges in the areas of system supports, training, utilizing data to inform and drive decision making, workforce recruitment and retention and importantly, utilizing all funding streams to best of their capacity.

Implementation:

(1) Implementation: Monitor DCYF policy and legislative efforts to ensure that operational, transitional and infrastructure developed acknowledge and address the needs of citizens and county workforce throughout Minnesota, specifically as these workstreams intersect with counties:

- a. Vision for Policy & Equity
- b. Budget & Finance
- c. Organizational Planning
- d. IT/Data
- e. Staffing & Labor Relations
- f. Compliance & Legal

(2) Governance: Through MACSSA, counties will seek and support legislative opportunities that strengthen intergovernmental collaboration between DCYF, counties and tribes, while also ensuring that critical services and funding connections between DCYF, DHS and additional state agencies receive attention. Counties seek an opportunity to codify and resource collaboration between DCYF and counties and tribes as they are interested/willing. The establishment of an state and local advisory committee for DCYF is not intended to supplant existing mechanisms for planning and implementation – such as workgroups or advisory councils, but rather supplement intergovernmental engagement and focus between the state, counties and idealistically the tribes and provide an opportunity for counties to engage in vision, planning and policy decisions early on in the process, while building trust and fostering relationships between systems.

Systemic Priority/Paradigm Trend Alignment
 (highlight all that apply and explain why)

- **Equity:** Promote racial equity and eliminate racial disparities in the human services system for all people across the state. *(systemic priority)*
- **Workforce:** Advocate for strategies to sustain and equip the workforce, and simplify work given the forecasted labor shortages. *(systemic priority/paradigm trend)*
- **Technology:** Collaboratively seek state investment in systems transformation and modernization which must include appropriate county collaboration, oversight, and guidance. *(systemic priority/paradigm trend)*
- **Governance/Partnerships:** Co-create state/county governance that results in clear accountability, appropriate allocation of resources, stabilized service delivery, and improved outcomes for people served. *(systemic priority/paradigm trend)*
- **Resident Service:** Adapt to individual needs to support real choices *(paradigm trend)*

The establishment and implementation of DCYF is cross cutting through MACSSA priority areas, providing opportunities to co-create state/county governance that results in clear accountability, appropriate allocation of resources, stabilized service delivery, and improved outcomes for people served.

In addition to the opportunities in governance, there are significant equity implications as DCYF and counties consider educational, programmatic, financing, data and training opportunities that may be housed or connected to DCYF.

Technology, innovation and the impact on workforce are entwined throughout every step of the planning and implementation of DCYF. MACSSA seeks to simplify and increase efficiencies at the worker level through modernization of technology systems, a focus on family and community service and administrative simplification – all with the goal of providing quality service to Minnesota children, youth and families.

The complexity and vastness of this work will require ongoing, sustained, resource collaboration across the implementation workstreams in addition to program specific workgroups.

Operational Priority (Committee) Alignment
 (highlight all that apply and explain why)

Adult Services	Children’s Services	Healthcare	Policy
Behavioral Health	Equity	Modernization	Self-Sufficiency

Why:
 The work of establishing DCYF will impact all areas currently with jurisdictional lines to children and family services at DHS (highlighted above), including but not limited to children’s services, self-sufficiency and equity – with other committees identified as programmatic needs dictate. In addition, with obvious technology implications as systems and opportunities are assessed, transferred, and supported. Equity is impacted due to the impact of the Human Service Performance Management System, which is broader than CFS within DHS, but has jurisdiction over CFS performance indicators. And

broader policy conversations about workstreams, governance and opportunities are more powerful as a unified county perspective/voice.

Rationale/Background:

In the current State-supervised, County-administered form of government, the dynamic between DHS and Counties subjects counties to the leadership style of the division and recipients of decision making, with little input into planning, funding, design and implementation decisions. This lack of trust and partnership often results in inefficiencies in funding and delivery, static systems, programmatic and staffing shortfalls, complicated regulatory and administrative procedures and an overburdening of county staff. The current schematic of planning defers to the state in planning and calling for county input, instead of taking an intergovernmental and systems approach that factors impact and vision throughout the process. This dynamic has been experienced in the implementation of many programs, notably the recent planning and implementation of Family First Prevention Services Act. While stunted and one sided in the beginning of planning and implementation – counties experienced increased collaboration, partnership and were positioned to help guide the work while the Office of Continuous Improvement (OCI) directed the work. This model encompassed a sponsor team, core team and workgroups that incorporated program expertise and interest into decision making. With this model, and additional models operating throughout state government, the establishment of DCYF presents an opportunity to consider a mechanism that supports long term collaboration in decision making, planning and implementation – with county and tribal elected and staff leadership positioned to lead, build knowledge, be active thought partners and decision makers.

High-level, one paragraph description of the issue and its importance:



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