

# Montana Child and Family Services Strategic Initiatives



The Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) is continuously working to improve operations and services in order to serve children and families in Montana more effectively and efficiently. Along with the needs of Montana children and families, there are many complex Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations that govern the work of the Division and define the outcomes that this plan targets for tracking and improvement. This document is intended to communicate current strategic initiatives underway within the Division to stakeholders and all Montanans. Furthermore, it is intended to provide a foundation for future work with all division stakeholders aimed at system improvement.

State of Montana  
Department of Public Health and  
Human Services  
Child and Family Services  
Richard Opper, Director  
4/1/2016

# How We Keep Children Safe and Families Strong

The Mission, vision and core values for the Child and Family Services Division form the foundation of all work done in the Division.

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| Mission              | Keeping Children Safe and Families Strong   |
| Statement of Purpose | To protect children who have been or are at substantial risk of abuse, neglect or abandonment. We strive to assure that all children have a family who will protect them from harm. We recognize the protective capacities of families and incorporate them in assessments, decision making and actions with the goal of improving safety, permanency and well-being for children. We encourage our communities to strengthen their prevention efforts and to share responsibility for the safety of its children and families. |
| Core Values          | Children have the right to grow and develop in safe and permanent family environments   |
|                      | The safety of children is dependent on the actions/omissions of adults  |
|                      | When families and communities collaborate, the possibility for success is increased   |
|                      | The safety of children in our care is dependent upon multi-level stewardship of human and financial resources   |

The following strategies are divided into three key results areas (KRAs). The KRAs are areas in which the Division must excel, in order to stabilize the current workforce shortage and succeed in accomplishing its mission. The strategies are the high-level, ongoing or one-time methods we are employing in our programs that are intended to improve the capacity and performance of the Division in the next 3-5 years.

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| Strategies   |
| <p><b>Key Results Area: Workforce Excellence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilizing vacancy savings to fund modified positions (43) statewide</li> <li>Advance-filling Child Protection Specialist (CPS) positions in offices with the highest turnover rates to maintain the number of CPS in the office and keep caseload averages from increasing</li> <li>Hiring a Human Resources Specialist to assist with the recruiting and onboarding of Division staff in an effort to strategically develop the workforce, assist supervisors with hiring paperwork, and reduce delays in the hiring process (complete)</li> <li>Utilizing hiring assessments for CPS positions to assist supervisors in hiring workers who are better suited for the work of a CPS</li> <li>Implementing Step 1 of a career ladder for CPS positions and working with HR and the labor management committee to complete additional steps in a two track career ladder: one for supervisors and one for master practitioners who wish to remain CPS workers</li> <li>Partnering with the University of Montana School of Social Work to offer Federal Title IV-E stipends to partially cover costs of BSW and MSW students' tuition in return for a commitment to work at the CFSD for a specified period of time upon receipt of degree</li> <li>Creating a CFSD Deputy Administrator position to oversee the Fiscal and Operations Bureau, the Program Bureau, the</li> </ul> |

Division Epidemiologist, the Training Unit, and the new electronic case management project

- Eliminating the Field Services Administrator position to allow the Division Administrator to directly supervise the Regional Administrators (complete)
- Creating a training unit to improve the development and ongoing education of all staff (complete)
- Partnering with the University of Montana School of Social Work to revise new worker training (online), training for foster parents, and supervisor training
- Implementing a simulation lab as part of the new worker training (complete)
- Hiring a Complaint and Critical Incident Manager and training staff in the application of safety science as a first step to developing a new team-based critical incident response model (complete)
- Creating a Region 6 to respond to the needs in Northwest Montana, which includes hiring a Regional Administrator and other regional staff
- Piloting the Employee Assistance Program's "Resilience" coaching program in one office to determine whether to expand to other employees in the Division

#### **Key Results Area: Practice/Policy Improvements and Initiatives**

- Contracting with the Council on Accreditation to do an assessment to determine what would be needed for CFSD to meet public child welfare agency accreditation standards (scheduled for the onsite review in 2016 after updated standards are finalized and released)
- Ongoing implementation of the SAMS (Safety Assessment and Management System) model, with Montana modifications, to meet statutory timelines and comply with audit findings; as well as, to prepare for Round 3 of the Federal Child and Family Services Review (SAMS was implemented as a requirement of the Federally required CFSR Round 2 Program Improvement Plan)
- Forming separate Intake and Ongoing Units in field offices with sufficient staff to allow for worker specialization
- Implementing and/or training of providers in evidence-based models: Safe Care Augmented home visiting model and Safety, Permanency, Well-Being Round Tables as examples
- Integrating the use of a Universal Checklist to assist in monitoring safety, permanency, and well-being indicators (based on state and federal law) into real-time CQI for cases
- Partnering with the Court Assessment Program on pilot projects across the state to implement Pre-Hearing Conferences and the Court Diversion Pilot Programs in an effort to increase timely permanency for children in the legal system and improve outcomes for children and families
- Updating and reformatting policies and procedures to follow international standards, to allow for policy to better reflect workflow, and to assist staff in readily accessing necessary policies and procedures

#### **Key Results Area: Technology Improvements and Initiatives**

- Providing all CPS staff with mobile tablets and smart phones (complete)
- Working to develop a new State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) to allow for case management system with workflow built in that will not require duplicate data entry or use of multiple systems and paper files and will have provider portals for information sharing
- Implementing of "Child and Family Stat" to monitor data in all key results areas: Centralized Intake, Investigations and Assessments, Intervention/Case Management, Resource Families, Workforce Excellence, Operational Excellence, and Child Welfare Stakeholders