

The State of Human Service Zones

Human Service Zones were statutorily operationalized on January 1, 2020. Significant administrative, fiscal and programmatic transformation has occurred in all operations areas over the past four years.

As of November 2024, there are currently 19 Human Service Zones employing 921 FTEs across the state.

In addition to the 921 FTE, there are 25 temporary employees, which include interns and other team members. Each of the positions represents a county employee.

The service delivery model in North Dakota is a “state supervised, locally administered” model. Ongoing efforts to join with the department of Health and Human Services to work as “one” to ensure timely, efficiently service delivery to the citizens of North Dakota.

We stand firm that the current model of state supervised, local administered services best meets the unique and diverse needs of North Dakota citizens.

In 2024, the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association completed a Strategic Plan, committing to the following goals:

- Manage, secure, and share resources to effectively deliver Human Services across North Dakota.
- Strengthen the Association’s impact on the shaping and implementation of state human service policy.
- Foster collaboration and implement efficient decision-making practices for the benefit of those we serve.

The ND Human Service Zone Director Association remain committed to continuing the work that has been done since 2020 to benefit all of North Dakota Citizens.

Ongoing Achievements

Increased Administrative Efficiency

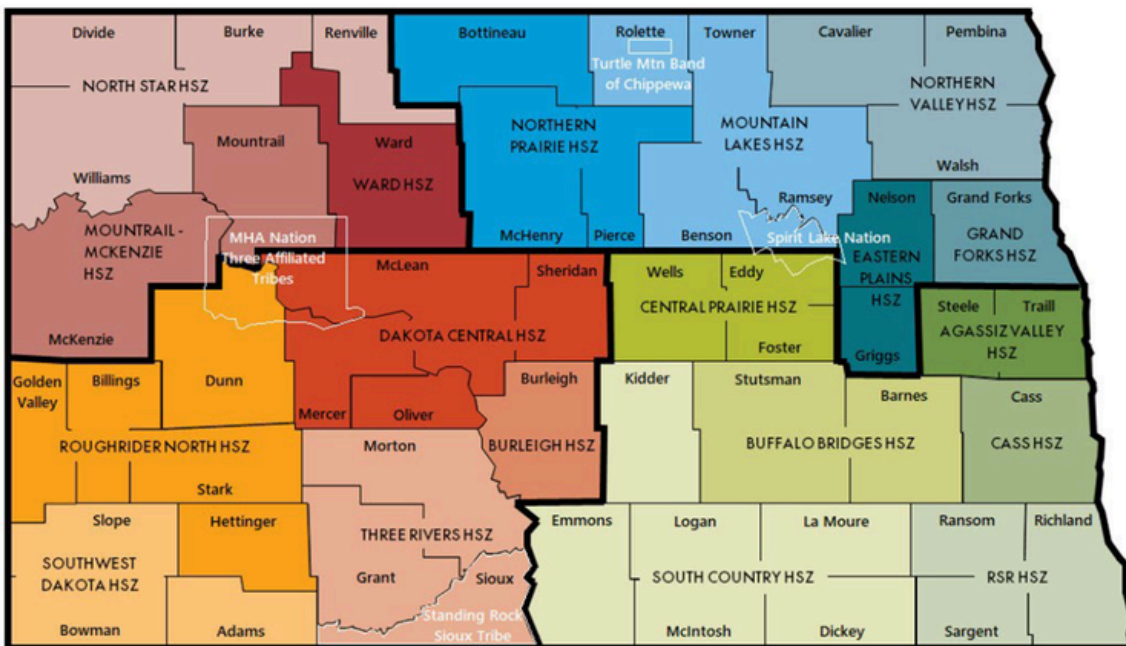
Clarity on indirect costs

Tapping into hidden capacity within the statewide workforce

Enhancing collaborative efforts

Increase merit system compliance

Focus on & advocate for local needs





Success of Human Service Zones

Substantial & Ongoing Achievements

Administrative Efficiency	Utilizing Hidden Workforce Capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 19 Human Service Zones; 18 HSZ Directors vs. 43 County Directors• Consistent budget building & review processes• Consistent account coding & tracking• Flexibility in adjusting local funding needs (staffing, vehicles, etc)• Unified Human Resources Policies• Unified General Assistance & indent burial policies• Unified Client compliant policy• Statewide Speciality Program (CHINS Unit, URM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statewide collaboration for economic assistance administration (e.g. caseload leveling, CSC support)• Cross-zonal service, support, & collaboration to ensure child safety & service needs are met• Cross-zonal collaboration for program and people supervision for Economic Assistance and Child Family Services• Statewide Child Protection Service Intake Unit• State Economic Assistance Customer Support Center (CSC) & missed interview team• Utilizing telecommute options when available; enhanced workforce opportunities, and growth & advancement
Clarity on Indirect Costs	Increased Merit System Compliance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated legislative clarity in 2023 legislative session• Increased oversight & support from HHS in countywide cost plan processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efforts to address salary equity statewide among positions & years of service• Benefits packages vary by host county
Enhancing Collaborative Efforts to Serve Citizens with Increased Efficiency	Focus on & Advocate for Local Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shifting FTE's to where needs are greatest• Zone-to-Zone collaboration to serve clients locally; locally administered programs• Preserving local partnerships (law enforcement, courts, schools, etc)• Coordinated response & timely implementation of "surge support" to resolve backlog in a program area• Administrative support for statewide units provided by multiple zones• identifying subject matter experts to train/mentor other zones in Qualified Service Provider enrollment, billing practices, etc.• Development of standard performance metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSZ Director Association strategic planning• Coordinated legislative priorities, monitoring & advocacy• Unified position statements on critical topics/needs• Continuation & expansion of locally provided services to address service deserts• Local Community partnerships & engagement• Local presence & response

