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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

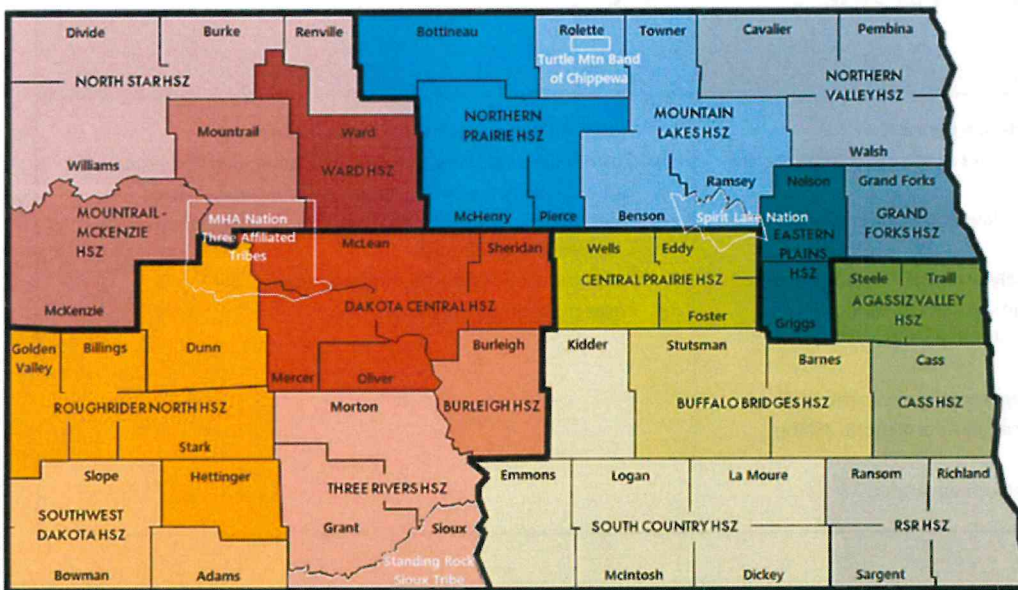
Clarity on indirect costs

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 & indigent 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

WHAT DO HUMAN SERVICE ZONES (HSZ) DO?

There are 53 counties in North Dakota. Local Human Services are provided by 19 Human Service Zones (HSZ) in accordance with HHS policies and ND Century Code.

Services
Provided
include:

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

- The Centralized Intake Unit gathers information about suspected child abuse or neglect, with 14 Zone workers stationed across the state.
- Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect are thoroughly assessed.
- During the assessment process, collaboration occurs with law enforcement, medical providers, schools, and other partners.
- Workers conduct CPS assessments to establish whether maltreatment has taken place or if other unsafe conditions exist in the household, leading to a maltreatment decision.

FOSTER CARE CASE MANGEMENT

- The HSZ Director is the legal custodian of foster youth
- Zone team members provides case management services such as ensuring foster youth's mental health, dental, vision, and education needs are met
- Meets with the youth monthly
- Prepares affidavits, maintains court orders, provides testimony
- Collaborates with foster care providers, States Attorney, law enforcement, schools, medical providers, other family members, and identified partners

CHILD IN NEED OF SERVICES (CHINS)

Statewide unit serving all Zones; Richland-Sargent-Ranson (RSR) HSZ is the state-selected host zone

- CHINS specialists role is to engage, educate, and empower parents/caregivers to be responsive to their child(ren)'s needs
- Receive referrals for youth exhibiting underage tobacco/vaping use, truancy, runaway and ungovernable behavior
- Provides a needs assessment and referrals to community services
- Serve as Dual Status Youth (DSY) liasons to help families, juvenile court and child welfare collaboratively to develop family-driven plans to resolve identified concerns

IN HOME CASE MANAGEMENT

Involves case management services to the family with an unsafe child, with the goal of mitigating threats of danger through an in-home safety plan

Face to Face visits two times a month

Provides referrals and assists families in accessing additional community services

Assists parents/caregivers to enhance parenting skills and increase safety in the home



PARENT AIDE SERVICES

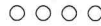
Partners with the case manager to implement case plan

Assisting with ensuring child safety and enhancing parent /caregiver protective capacities through teaching and coaching

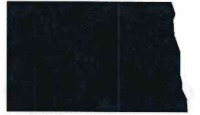
Connects the family with community resources and enhance informal support systems

Supports reunification efforts





HUMAN SERVICE ZONES



ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

- Determine eligibility for Healthcare, SNAP, Child Care Assistance, LIHEAP, and TANF programs
- Leveled caseload ensure benefits are processed timely by leveling caseloads statewide
- Statewide customer Support Center (CSC)
- Human Service Zones provide walk-in services and technical support

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Determines eligibility for applicants seeking final disposition or General Assistance services

Communicate with surviving family members and funeral providers regarding eligibility

All other community resources must be exhausted prior to approving General Assistance applications

DIRECT CARE ASSOCIATES

(QUALIFIED SERVICE PROVIDERS-QSPS)

- Provides services to qualified individuals (e.g. elderly, permanently or temporally disabled) in their own home
 - Personal Care Services (e.g. bathing, dress/undress, hair care)
 - Homemaker services (e.g. housekeeping, laundry, meal prep, chore services)
 - Non-Emergency medical transportation
- Determined by local Need and alternative service availability-Offered in 14 Zones
- Collaborates with HCBS case managers for state-funded services
- Offer private pay and locally administered services

CONTRACTED SERVICES

Specialty services provided through Zone contracts in collaboration with HHS (e.g. Adult Protective Service (APS) and Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program)

- APS: assess safety of vulnerable adults who are at risk of harm for possible abuse, neglect, exploitation of self-neglect
- URM: Provides services to approved minors who have arrived to the United States without a parent or guardian.
 - Agassiz Valley HSZ is the federal sub-recipient grantee with oversight provided by NDHHS-ORS. Foster care services and benefits to meet cultural and linguistic needs are provided.

LOCAL SERVICES

Each Zone Offers unique local services based on community need

- Food Pantry-Help Organize the local food pantry or is a part of the food pantry in some capacity
- Collaborate with local agencies to provide services (e.g. telehealth options within the community)
- Collaborate with other county departments and local partners (e.g. emergency responses)
- Services for citizens in need (e.g. back to school supply drives, holiday giving projects, emergency supplies and supports)
- Engage in local community coalitions as a representative of the HSZ
- Flexibility to be creative to help meet the needs of our local citizens

Human Service Zones

Behavior Health

Adult Protective Services

Adoption Services

Child Care

Placement Options

Private Providers

Human Service Centers

Medical Services

Children and Family Services

Economic Assistance

Children Advocacy Centers

State Hospital

Technology

Refugee Services

Housing

Development Disabilities Services

Protection and Advocacy