

**Forest/Oneida/Vilas Counties Human & Social Services
Governance and Management Structures
Feasibility Study**

Welcome & Introductions

Feasibility Study

- Purpose
- Process
- Product
- Timeline

Existing Structure for Human & Social Services in Forest/Oneida/Vilas Counties: Single County Department of Social Services, Multi-County Department of Community Programs (The Human Service Center for Forest/Oneida/Vilas Counties)

- Advantages
- Challenges

Allowable Statutory Structures for Human and Social Services in WI Counties

- Single and Multi-County Department(s) of Community Programs & Department(s) of Social Services
- Single and Multi-County Human Services Department(s)
- Statewide Trends in Structural Design

Regional Service Systems Developments

- WI Department of Health Services Regional System Designs (Income Maintenance, Aging Services, Behavioral Health Services)
- Preference for Regional Services in Forest/Oneida/Vilas

Stakeholder Feedback

Wisconsin County Human & Social Service Agencies Historical Perspectives & Allowable Structures

Today's **County Human and Social Service Agencies** developed to their current form over time. Agencies are:

- County based, emphasizing local control with County Board oversight.
- Monitored and funded by state agencies (DCF, DHS, DOC), state agencies provide some but not all funding for operations, Counties contribute significant amounts of local funds to support programming. State agencies develop policy and provide administrative oversight to Counties.
- WI State Statutes (Chapters 46 and 51) identify mandated human and social services counties are required to provide, these statutory references include allowable structures for operations.
- Each County determines how to structure and provide services, most use a combination of county staff and contractor services for personnel.

Social Service Agencies

- The Great Depression led to the development of social programs such as social security and aid to families with dependent children. State and local agencies developed with a focus on serving the elderly and infirm, people with disabilities, and families with children living in poverty. These social programs led to the development of WI County Departments of Social Services (DSS).
- Today's Wisconsin Social Service agencies continue a primary focus on child/family well-being.

Mental Health Agencies

- The 1960-70s experienced a focus on mental health services with the deinstitutionalization of people with serious mental health concerns.
- This effort led to the development of County Departments of Community Programs (DCP). These agencies focus on mental health, substance use, and services to people with developmental disabilities.
- In the 1990s Wisconsin developed the Family Care program which now serves the elderly and people with disabilities including developmental disabilities.

Human Service Structures

- In the 1980s Counties operating separate DSS and DCP agencies influenced state legislation to allow agencies to combine DSS and DCP services. These agencies became known as Human Service Departments (HSD).

Allowable Structures for Human/Social Services

- **Single County Departments of Social Services and Departments of Community Programs**
 - DSS agencies focus on child welfare, juvenile court services, income maintenance and other economic support services (other services can be incorporated into DSS agencies).
 - DCP agencies focus on mental health, substance use, and services to children with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities.
 - This was the most common design for human and social services in Counties prior to 1990.
- **Multi County Departments of Community Programs**
 - Chapter 51 mandated mental health programming through DCP agencies. In more rural/remote parts of WI, Counties joined together to form multi-county DCP agencies. This occurred to share personnel and financial resources to achieve economies of scale.
 - Some examples of local (historical) multi-county DCP agencies are Ashland-Iron-Price DCP, Barron-Burnett-Rusk-Sawyer-Washburn DCP, Shawano-Waupaca DCP.
 - Three Multi County DCPs continue to operate in WI: Forest/Oneida/Vilas Human Service Center, Langlade/Lincoln/Marathon North Central Health Care, Grant/Iowa DCP. In addition, a small number of counties continue to operate single County DSS and DCP agencies.
- **County Human Service Departments**
 - WI State Statute Chapter 46 was modified to define a County Human Service Department (HSD)
 - HSDs are required to combine services provided in DSS and DCP agencies.
 - HSDs can also incorporate other County-based services such as Aging, Health, and Veterans services based on County discretion.
 - State Statutes define the composition of HSD Boards
- **Multi County Human and Social Service Operations/Regionalization Efforts**
 - Although allowed in statute, there are no existing examples of multi county DSS or HSD operations.
 - Some state agencies have encouraged counties to regionalize services through collaborative designs.
 - Some of these regionalization efforts are mandated by State agencies (income maintenance) some are incentivized with additional funding (mental health)

**Forest/Oneida/Vilas Human/Social Services
Talking Points
December 2023**

- The County Boards for Forest/Oneida/Vilas Counties recently passed resolutions which may modify the governance and management structures for the Counties' Human and Social Services.
- Human and social services provided by the Counties include behavioral health (mental health, substance use) services, developmental disability services for children, child protection and child/family welfare services, juvenile justice services, income maintenance, and in some Counties, aging services.
- The Counties remain responsible for providing public human/social services, existing services will continue to be offered as the Counties consider changes.
- The changes being considered are about how county agencies are structured and how agencies manage programs and services for county residents. These changes are not focused on individual programs.
- Any changes which may occur to management structures would take effect late in the calendar year of 2024.
- In the 1980s, WI State Statutes (Chapter 46.23) were developed to allow Counties choices in how they manage public human/social services, in particular options were created to allow governance and management structures which combine services provided by multiple agencies into unified organizations.
- Since these State Statutes were developed, 64 of the 72 counties in Wisconsin have opted to change the structures by which human/social services are provided.
- Counties that are considering changes to human/social services agency structures are required to complete a Feasibility Study which engages Stakeholders in discussions about the best way to manage services in the Counties.
- Forest/Oneida/Vilas Counties have begun a Feasibility Study, the Study is expected to be complete by the end of March 2024.
- If the Feasibility Study recommends changes to the existing governance and management of services an Implementation Plan will be created. The Implementation Plan would offer details about how County agencies would be structured and how services will be managed in the Counties.

Appendix A: FOV Stakeholder Group Meeting Agenda & Information

- If an Implementation Plan is needed it would be developed after the Feasibility Study is completed (spring/summer of 2024).
- A wide group of Stakeholders is being invited to participate in the Feasibility Study. This includes County Board officials, local providers of human/social services, and individuals and families who are receiving or may have received services from the Counties.
- People interested in participating in the Feasibility Study should express their interest by sending an email to the following address: oneidadss@oneidacountywi.gov The email will be checked regularly. People who wish to submit comments or suggestions may do so through this email address. Please leave contact information including an email address or phone number if you would like a reply.
- Any changes to the structure of county agencies would be completed to strengthen and enhance the services provided to county residents today.