










**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
2023 WORK PLAN Dated 12.7.22**


Project Complete	✓
Moderate to Significant Progress	↑
Minimal to Moderate Progress	↔
No Progress or Project No Longer Being Pursued	↓

Activity	Actions	Outcomes	Time Line	Dependencies	Progress Indicator	Progress Description
1. Create and implement a leadership transition plan including new director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon hire of the new director, create a support plan Work with County Administration regarding a financial and leadership strategy for succession planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuity of operational plans will be ensured 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approvals of decision makers 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 2023 Christa Jensen became the interim director of DSS following Vicki Tylka's resignation. In March of 2023, Christa Jensen was hired as the director of DSS.
2. Priority Based Budgeting – Integrate information collected to further support Objective 3.3 of the County's Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Followed county's protocol for Priority Based Budgeting to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Performance Indicators will be used to create a dashboard to further support tracking progress of specific DSS programs, especially those that support Objective 3.3 	To be determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical assistance and support from county leadership and PBB consultants 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSS has been able to remain within budget during 2023; Evaluation to ensure the right people and programs are in place has been paramount. Through evaluation of external contracts and reducing the number of anticipated out of home placements for 2024, DSS's 2024 budget is 6.5% decrease from the 2023 budget.
3. Complete DSS move to Marathon County – Lake View Drive facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize remodel plan, furniture acquisition, RISE UP mural Create staged moving plan for continuity of operations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building move planned for 1st quarter of 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to partner with FCM and County Administration 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In April of 2023 DSS vacated the Thomas Street location and finalized the move to the Lakeview Drive Campus. We have decreased our overall footprint.
4. Implementation of Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a plan to reduce out of home care days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children stay safe with their families Will meet goal of decreased out of home care costs of \$62, 528 2023 budget and reduction of 29 placements Note: Reduction in costs factor in significant increased costs of congregate care placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreasing out of home care days require system support Adequate DSS staffing to have manageable caseloads Additional service contracts/providers are needed in the community 	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of September 2023, DSS has 127 youth in out of home care, compared to this date 2022 there were 183 children in out of home care. Projections based on data up to September 30, 2023, and under the assumption that the placements continue as currently arranged throughout the remainder of the year we will exceed the expectation to decrease out of home care costs as well as reductions in out of home

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						placements in both CPS and YJ. Our 2024 budget reflects continued decreases in out of home placements.
a. Family Keys Housing Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Received grant to demonstrate project of transitional housing for child welfare families ▪ Continue in Phase 2 of longer-term planning ▪ Report on progress to SS Board and HHS committee every 6 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce out of home care days due to unsafe or inadequate housing ▪ Increase housing capacity for families in our county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ January 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partnership support, internal capacity 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family Keys received its first family in February 2023. As of November 2023, 19 families have been served and the program has prevented the removal of, or reunified, 40 children. Conservatively, each child placed in foster care costs an average of \$750 per month, totaling \$30,000. Family Keys funding through DHS is hoped to continue through 6/30/25. Sustainability of the program will continue to be explored and discussed beyond the grant period.
b. Exploration of opportunities to serve high acuity youth in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applied for a grant through Department of Children and Families November 2022. ▪ Implementation of Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) with high acuity youth served by DSS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth with complex needs will remain in our community with comprehensive services rather than live in congregate care, including out state ▪ Stabilization of Placements with emphasis on in home supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dependent on grant award ▪ In process 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSS was not a recipient of the high acuity needs grant which was applied for in November 2022. ▪ TBRI training has been provided to social workers and supervisors as well as to partners and caregivers, including educational personnel and providers such as group home and skill development staff. ▪ The program has served 13 individual families including foster and relative placements and biological and adoptive parents ▪ In 2023, thus far only 1 child has required out of state placement in a residential level setting.
c. Involve child welfare partners, stakeholders, and decision makers about the Family First Prevention Services Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a community wide informational and partnership strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partners and decision makers support the concept behind the Act and recognize that children belong with their parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Throughout 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To go beyond awareness, need support from DCF to have most effective plan for community engagement including an understanding of specific service changes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSS has provided formal education regarding FFPSA to our partners at NCHC, the multidisciplinary team through the CAC, schools, and legal partners. Discussions around FFPSA and the need to serve children and families in our community is a regular part of professional conversations with families and community partners.

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d. Alternative to Shelter Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RFP for alternative model – Youth Opportunity Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase service array for community-based services, lessen reliance on shelter care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beginning in January 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DSS did go out for RFP and received one proposal. After careful consideration, we have decided not to proceed with the Request for Proposal (RFP). While we acknowledge the importance of innovation and seeking external expertise, we have determined that the available funds are insufficient to justify outsourcing this project. As stewards of taxpayer dollars, we believe we can better allocate resources by managing the program internally. This approach allows us to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the program while maintaining cost control and ensuring a more direct alignment with our organization's goals and values. By running the program internally, we can closely monitor progress, adapt swiftly to changing circumstances, and maintain a stronger connection with our community, ultimately delivering better results for all stakeholders. A program change proposal will be submitted to the County Administrator and to the social services board.
e. Implement Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create an oversight Board ▪ Develop processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional support for children with their families and out of home care, as ordered by the court. ▪ Increased in home days, decreased out of home care days- earlier to permanence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Court order for CASA services ▪ Ability to match volunteers with children 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CASA of Marathon County received National approval and an executive director has been appointed and finalized training in Oct 2024. Judges have been engaged and a draft court order has been developed. An office location is being finalized and there are multiple volunteers undergoing training. It is anticipated the first case would be assigned to CASA in Spring 2024.
5. Ensure performance metrics for IM Central Consortium continue at contracted levels during increased requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building on historical efficiencies, move to a consortium-based family team model for delivery of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good customer service, teamwork, efficiencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan to be in place January-February 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New software system for call center requires adjustments ▪ Trial and error with new processes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The consortia met metrics in all areas except a few months of call center. Contributing factors were staff shortages, widespread technical issues/outages, and abnormally high workload. Funded LTE positions

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						<p>were added to meet the workload demands. We can get reports from our new call center system in fall of 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We combined staff from across the consortium to create a 'family team' and the efficiencies gained are helping us manage the high workload, along with staff overtime. We have eliminated the need for 4 counties to have a staff working appointments daily and instead have 1 staff working these for the consortia. We have paired duties differently which has also freed up some staff time. Five supervisors are no longer assigning out work daily, each supervisor is taking 1 week in 5 to assign out for the consortia.
6. Child Support – continue system transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELEVATE Grant New grant for court ordered services – Children Come First 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Support provides essential services to meet the goals of those they serve, ultimately ensuring meaningful employment and strong family relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creativity in service delivery may be limited by grant conditions DSS needs to be fully staffed 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have been navigating how to leverage both grants, ELEVATE & Children First, to maximize client offerings. We have seen the most success, so far, in utilizing Children First to focus on sobriety and building a foundation for customers to be successful in gaining and maintaining employment. We have had quite a few customers who, after 16 weeks of Children First, have voluntarily chosen to enroll in ELEVATE. We have also helped clients who have sited medical issues as a reason for their non-compliance to work with DVR and to apply for disability with the ADRC. These individuals are legally able to work full time because they don't have restrictions from a medical provider or a disability determination, so we can use the outcome of their application to ensure their orders are appropriate. As an example, 3 individuals have been ordered to Children First who were citing medical problems as the reason for why they were not paying

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						<p>their support. We required them to provide medical documentation and to apply for disability. Working with them has helped us understand more as to why some of our clients struggle with follow through when there are real medical/mental health issues and shape our future delivery of expectations during our contempt actions. Two of them have since worked with us and been awarded disability/been found unable to work. One of them has been given feedback from a new provider and from DVR that his medical issues do not fully impact his ability to work. We were able to use the documentation that we got from his case to demonstrate to the court his ability to be employed and to meet his court order.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have emulated our local Drug Court and beginning in October, we now bring our Children First enrollees into a court setting on a weekly basis to see if that helps with regular check ins/case management/teeth. ▪ We have enrolled over 20 individuals into this program in the last 5 months and continue to expand offerings such as the Fatherhood support group, Life Coaching and continued access to AODA counseling and other supports.
7. Build efficiencies in the Administrative Support Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create 6-member team to provide bench strength in front desk and program support teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ January 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vacancies need to be filled, training complete 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Agency Administrative Assistant Team vacancies were filled to have a six (6) person team in place however at the end of third quarter staff turnover occurred on this team, including two team members accepting job promotions. As of the beginning of November 2023, the AAA Team has one (1) vacancy remaining and the existing team members are working hard to learn the job to increase bench

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						strengths striving to once become a solid functioning team.