

Community Empowerment Session: The legislative budget and how it impacts your community

December 1, 2021

Responses from DHS

The information in this document is in response to discussions with community members during the Dec. 1, 2021 Community Empowerment Session hosted by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS).

Responses are organized by a community-identified topic of interest, and within each topic include the following categories of information:

- High-level contextual information on the topic
- Current happenings at DHS
- Resources & Opportunities

Community-identified topics

- [Creating culturally responsive services](#)
- [Mental health, trauma-informed services, and responding to on-going crisis and trauma](#)
- [Defining and addressing "health disparities"](#)
- [Lack of stable and affordable housing](#)
- [Improving access to and independence navigating DHS programs and services](#)
- [State Childcare licensing questions](#)
- [Addressing disparities in the foster care system](#)
- [Refugee resettlement program updates](#)
- [Legislative advocacy](#)

Community Identified Topic: Creating culturally responsive services

What is DHS doing to create culturally responsive services?

High-level contextual information

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards is a [core value](#) to the Community Supports Administration (CSA) programs and services provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care that is responsive to the needs of the people receiving our care and support. CSA maintain policies to support implementing the CLAS standards and additional best practices in culturally responsive services into every day practice. We are currently developing a [CLAS Standards Statewide Plan and CLAS Implementation Grants](#).

Current happenings at DHS

- In the DHS-operated health care system referred to as '[Direct Care and Treatment](#),' upon admission and throughout the course of service delivery, individuals receiving services complete a cultural assessment and are asked what modifications could be made to the care that they provide in order to better meet their cultural and linguistic needs. Direct Care and Treatment staff are happy to make adjustments at any point in the course of care to better meet the needs of the people receiving services in Direct Care and Treatment programs.
- In the Disability Services area, there are efforts to engage and design policy that is responsive to culturally specific and traditionally underserved communities. For example, the [Innovation grants program](#) launched in 2016, provides funding to support new and innovative ideas to help people with disabilities to work and earn money, live in housing of their choice, choose their care providers, their friends and social activities.
- Moving Home Minnesota Tribal Initiative and Capacity Building grant is a funding opportunity supporting the Tribal Nations capacity and infrastructure development towards culturally specific services for tribal members.

How is DHS working with American Indian communities and Tribes in Direct Care and Treatment services?

High-level contextual information

9% of people currently served by Direct Care and Treatment services are American Indian or Alaskan Native. Direct Care and Treatment continues to work on an ongoing basis with tribal partners and looks to tribes to guide disposition of care for individuals served in Direct Care and Treatment programs.

Current happenings at DHS

- One Community Addiction Recovery Enterprise (CARE) facility in the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Services (MHSATS) division in Direct Care and Treatment has transferred services to White Earth Nation to continue substance use services independently and in a culturally specific manner. This transfer included the provision of \$800k in resources.

Community Identified Topic: Mental health, trauma-informed services, and responding to on-going crisis and trauma

High-level contextual information

DHS has sought to support both providers and communities impacted by mental health needs and current health disparities. For example, [DHS and Avivo collaborated](#) to support culturally responsive care to serve marginalized populations in Minnesota.

Resources & Opportunities

- DHS has a website to offer [resources for communities affected by racial trauma](#) that we encourage providers and individuals to utilize as needed.
- CSA supports a range of [children's mental health services](#) across the state, from prevention to crisis response, school programs to treatment.
- Content for children's mental health partners and providers is available on [children's mental health partners and providers](#).

Community Identified Topic: Defining and addressing "health disparities"

High-level contextual information

All DHS work is guided by the DHS Equity Policy which defines disparity as difference in health that is closely linked with social, economic, or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities impact groups that systematically experience greater obstacles including communities of color, American Indians, and persons with disabilities.

DHS is committed to advancing equity, reducing disparities in DHS program outcomes, and improving access to human services for communities experiencing inequities.

Community Identified Topic: Lack of stable and affordable housing

How is DHS responding to the lack of stable and affordable housing?

High-level contextual information

While DHS does not provide money to build affordable housing, DHS offers income supports and services to support people once they are housed. DHS works closely with partners from across the state, including Minnesota Housing and the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, to ensure that resources are in place to support housing stability.

Resources

- For more information about available housing and support service programs, please visit [Housing Benefits 101 \(HB101\)](#).

Community Identified Topic: Improving access to and independence navigating DHS programs and services

What is DHS doing to promote independent living for individuals with disabilities during COVID?

High-level contextual information

DHS is expanding options for people with disabilities to act as the employer of their workers, known as “self-direction” in the disability world. Self-directed programs provide increased flexibility in federal rules and require the person to take on additional responsibilities as the employer, such as finding and training staff, developing the support/care plan. Self-direction is available in the personal care assistance program (PCA Choice) and for people on the waivers (Consumer Directed Community Supports).

Current happenings at DHS

- DHS has expanded online content through [Disability Hub](#) to help people learn skills and access resources that will help them understand their responsibilities with self-direction.
- There are several DHS legislative actions including bills pending in the 2022 session and 2021 session to support independent living for people with disabilities.
 - SF4410 – Legislation to allow PCA agencies to be reimbursed by MA for driving the person they support to appointments, community activities, etc.
 - Implementation of Informed Choice (passed in the 2021 session - Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1st Special Session, Chapter 7) in employment, housing, self-direction (i.e. the person using services being the employer of their workers) and use of technology.
- Waiver reimagine phase two will expand self-direction options for people on the individual support waiver and the residential support waiver. The expansion will allow people who access residential support services to self-direct a portion of their services. Self-direction will be an available option for all people who utilize HCBS waiver services, and a person will not be required to choose between a CDCS budget and traditional waiver services. Regardless of choosing self-direction entirely, in part or not at all, it is the intention of the division for a person’s budget for purchasing services not to be impacted.
- Community First Services and Supports will be replacing the PCA program later in 2022. This option increases the self-direction options for people using state plan services and includes a budget model.

Resources & Opportunities

- [Disability Hub](#)
 - [Planning for work activities](#)
 - [Charting the LifeCourse Tools](#)
 - [E1MN](#) is Minnesota's state agency partnership to advance Employment First outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities.
- [Disability Benefits 101](#)
- [Housing Benefits 101](#)
- [Informed Choice and Supported Decision Making Toolkit](#)
- [Moving Home Minnesota Program](#) provides support for transitions to community living and integration (from institutional settings).

Community Identified Topic: State Childcare licensing questions

How will child care licensing modernization be conducted? Will those reforms include provider input?

Resources & Opportunities

- [Child Care Regulation Modernization Projects Overview](#)
- Check out the [Child Care Regulation Modernization projects](#) website for getting involved. The website includes contact information for reaching out to the project team, information about upcoming meetings, and other resources and project background information.

Frequently Asked Questions on Child Care Assistance Program Timelines:

- How long does it take to get paid once a provider submits a bill?
 - Answer: Policy allows up to 21 days. Most agencies exceed that timeline, with most payments processed within 5-10 days.
- How long do families (and the provider they've chosen) have to wait when they apply or reapply for CCAP?
 - Answer: Local agencies should process applications within 30 days, and sometimes up to 45 days if the family agree to longer to finish the process.
- If there are other questions, please let us know. Providers can ask CCAP related questions by emailing dhs.ccap@state.mn.us or calling our Provider Line at 651-431-4848

Community Identified Topic: Addressing disparities in the foster care system

We are hoping to explore this topic further in a future Community Empowerment Session.

Resources & Opportunities

- [Minnesota Child Welfare Training Academy](#)
- [UMN – Duluth – Tribal Child Welfare Training and Certificate Partnership](#)
- [UMN – Center for Advanced Studies on Child Welfare](#)
- [News, initiatives, reports, work groups / Minnesota Department of Human Services \(mn.gov\)](#)
- For more information on the state and federal measures used to monitor the status of children served by Minnesota's child welfare system, see the [Child Welfare Data Dashboard](#).

Community Identified Topic: Refugee resettlement program updates

What updates does DHS have in their efforts to support refugee resettlement?

High-level contextual information

While there is nothing specific to refugee resettlement currently happening in the state legislature, there is a lot of activity federally in response to Afghan resettlement and response to Ukrainians seeking safety.

- Minnesota has welcomed 1260 Afghan evacuees since October 2021. This was accomplished through Minnesota residents and leadership stepping up to be a part of a coordinated response. In addition, the federal government has invested additional resources to support this population both in initial resettlement and to support their integration over time.
- States do not have a formal role in the US Government’s “Uniting for Ukraine” response to welcome up to 100,000 Ukrainians fleeing violence. To date, all activities are federal and the state does not play a role in implementation of any of the response efforts. That said, DHS is working to ensure there is appropriate guidance and information available to counties about the immigration status for these individuals in the case they are in Minnesota and seeking assistance to ensure appropriate eligibility determinations. The most up to date information can be found at the following federal websites: <https://ukraine.welcome.us/> or <https://www.uscis.gov/>.

Community Identified Topic: Legislative Advocacy

How can community members engage in the legislative process with DHS?

Resources & Opportunities

Members of the community can involve themselves in the legislative process in many ways, including:

- If legislative advocacy is new to you, familiarize yourself with the legislative process. The Revisor’s Office has a summary of Minnesota’s legislative process here: <https://www.leg.mn.gov/leg/howbill>.
- Contact your legislators if you support or oppose specific legislation, would like a legislator to bring forward legislation that you care about, or simply to share your story and make suggestions for how government can work better for you or others. Ask to meet with your legislator to discuss issues of importance to you – prepare what you’d like to say in advance so you can share your message effectively during a short meeting. Legislators like to hear real life examples of how a policy, law, program or legislation impacts you and your family or community.
- Consider attending a hearing or offering in-person or written testimony to a committee.
- Some legislators send out semi-regular email updates – consider signing up for these updates.
- On the Revisor’s Office site you can create a [MyBills](#) account if you know of a specific bill that you want to track. You can also subscribe to [House](#) and [Senate](#) bill introductions and committee schedules.
- If you are interested in specific policies or laws, learn about them. The [Revisor's Office](#) website has a great deal of information on legislative activities and process, and is where you can search for bills, statutes, rules or session laws.
- Seek out other individuals that share your thoughts on an issue and coordinate your advocacy. Seek out for trade organizations or advocacy groups that represent the issue or issues you are concerned about and contact them to find out what you can do to help.