



Establishing the Department of Children, Youth, and Families

MN P-20 Education Partnership

Thursday, March 21, 2024



- **Minnesota Management and Budget – DCYF Implementation Office**
 - Elizabeth Ebot – Asst. Transition Director, Engagement and Equity

Here to share information, and continue the conversation

- The goals of this conversation are to:
 - Provide a brief overview of the statute that establishes the new Department of Children, Youth, and Families and an Implementation Office;
 - Highlight recent implementation updates and progress;
 - Share how we're connecting with community partners and the purpose behind our external engagement; and
 - Discuss ways to inform the Implementation Office's planning and preparations for the new agency.

Vision – Placing Children at the Center of Government

- Our state depends on the success of Minnesota children, youth, and families.
- The Department of Children, Youth, and Families puts children at the center of state government -- a permanent state agency and commissioner focused on elevating children and families in policy and budget decisions.
- This is a bold plan to realign state government to better coordinate and resource our systems serving children and youth, focused on equity so that all children can thrive.
- The creation of a new DCYF will:
 - Align outcomes and policy and pursue equity for children, youth, and families across state government.
 - Elevate the priorities and funding needs of children, youth, and families.
 - Focus local partners on improving the front door for services, with a goal to ease access and navigation for families and improve service.
 - Sharpen the focus of state agencies to best address issues central to the people they serve

How We Got Here

Practicing Child-Centered Government

- Families and those who work with them are asking for coordination, engagement, and culturally and individually responsive programs that meet their children's needs throughout their development.
- Governance reports, cross-agency work, OLA reports, and learnings from other states have built the case for additional alignment.
- It's time for Minnesota to create an agency centered on children, similar to governance structures in more than half of states.



Children's Cabinet – Cross-Agency Connection

- Children's Cabinet Shared Governance
 - Children's Cabinet
 - Senior Leadership Team – assistant and deputy level commissioners
 - Interagency leadership team
 - Cross-agency action teams in following areas have launched between 2019-2023:
 - Mental Health
 - Child Care & Early Learning
 - Educational Opportunity
 - Housing
 - Youth Justice Transformation
 - Children's Cabinet Advisory Council and Council on Early Childhood Education and Care
 - County and tribal representation



Learning from MN History and Governance

- **1995** – Legislation passed to replace the Department of Education with the more broadly focused Department of Children, Families, and Learning
- **2003** – Programs distributed back to MDE, MDH, and DHS by Governor Pawlenty
- **2010** – Minnesota's Early Childhood Advisory Council task force recommended freestanding, cabinet level office of early learning; Office of Early Learning created in 2011
- **2019** – Preschool Development Grant strategic plan calls on need for enhanced and coordinated early childhood systems, program access, and funding.
- **2022** – Early Childhood Governance Report created roadmap and steps to consider.
- **2023** – Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan propose a transition process with dedicated time and people to better center children, youth, and families in state governance.



Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Focus for the Department of Children, Youth and Families

- **Principles:**

- Whole family focus
- Focus on a child throughout their life, from intentional prevention to downstream services
- Consolidation of early childhood programs
- Services are easy to access / navigate (“front door”)
- Cross-agency coordination will still be needed (one agency can’t do everything)
- Improved and more equitable outcomes achieved for all races, incomes, economic statuses and places of being

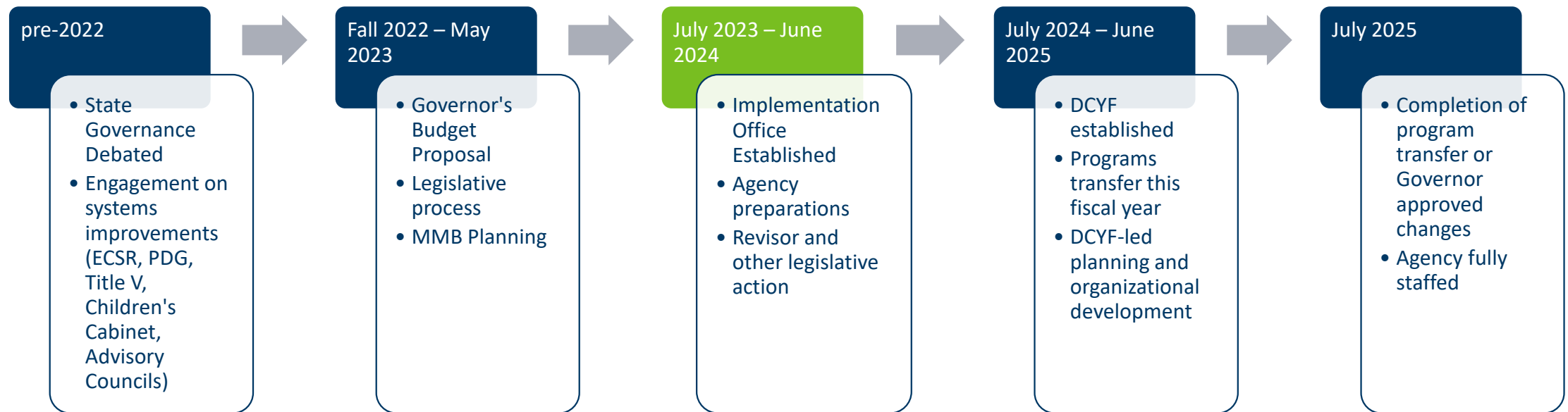
Core programs proposed to move into the new agency:

- ❖ Child care and early learning programs
- ❖ Child Support, Child Safety and Permanency, and other family-focused community programs
- ❖ Economic support and food assistance programs
- ❖ Youth opportunity and older youth investments

2023 Minnesota Session Law – Chapter 70

- The statute obtains authority and resources to support creation, alignment, and launch of a two-year process of moving core child, youth, and family support programs to the new agency that will be established in July 2024. The law:
 - Creates an implementation office and transition fund;
 - Establishes the Department effective July 1, 2024 with a Commissioner appointed on the same day;
 - Adds the Department to existing authorities and establishing administrative controls of the Commissioner;
 - Directs the transfer of core programs between July 1, 2024 and July 1, 2025;
 - Provides employee protections;
 - Requires engagement;
 - Requires a report to the legislature in March 2024 on a series of deliverables;
 - Requires quarterly reports regarding status of transfers during the transfer period;
 - To the extent not prohibited by law, allows coordinating activities, improving service delivery, and implementing innovative practices, research, or evaluation;
 - Creates a systems account (modeled after existing DHS system account) to enhance computer systems necessary for the efficient operation of the programs; and
 - Provides instructions to the revisor.

DCYF: Phases



System transformation

Interagency partnerships

Engagement and partnership – cross-sector

Programs Identified to Transfer

Children and Family Services at the Department of Human Services:

- Management Operations and Business Integration
- Child Care Services
- Child Safety and Permanency
- Child Support
- Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division
- Office of Economic Opportunity

Office of Inspector General & Department of Human Services Operations

- Licensing functions for family child care, child care centers, certificated child care centers, and child foster care.
- Program integrity units for related Child and Family Service (CFS) programs
- DHS Central Operations functions - Human Resources, Finance, General Counsel, Compliance, and Management Services, etc.

Programs from the Office of Teaching and Learning at the Department of Education

- Early Learning Services division (except Part B 619)
- After-School Community Learning Grant Program

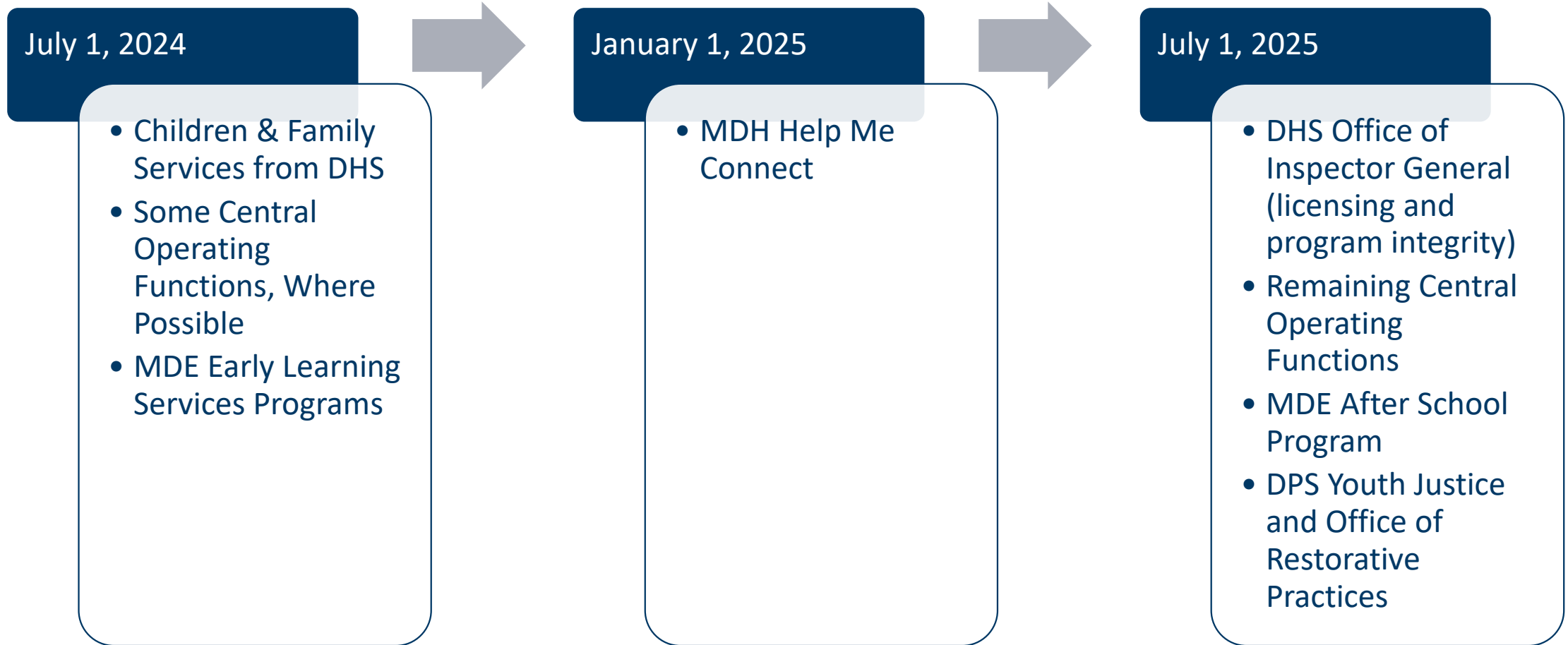
Programs from the Department of Public Safety:

- Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee
- Youth Intervention Program grant
- Youth Justice Office
- Office of Restorative Practices

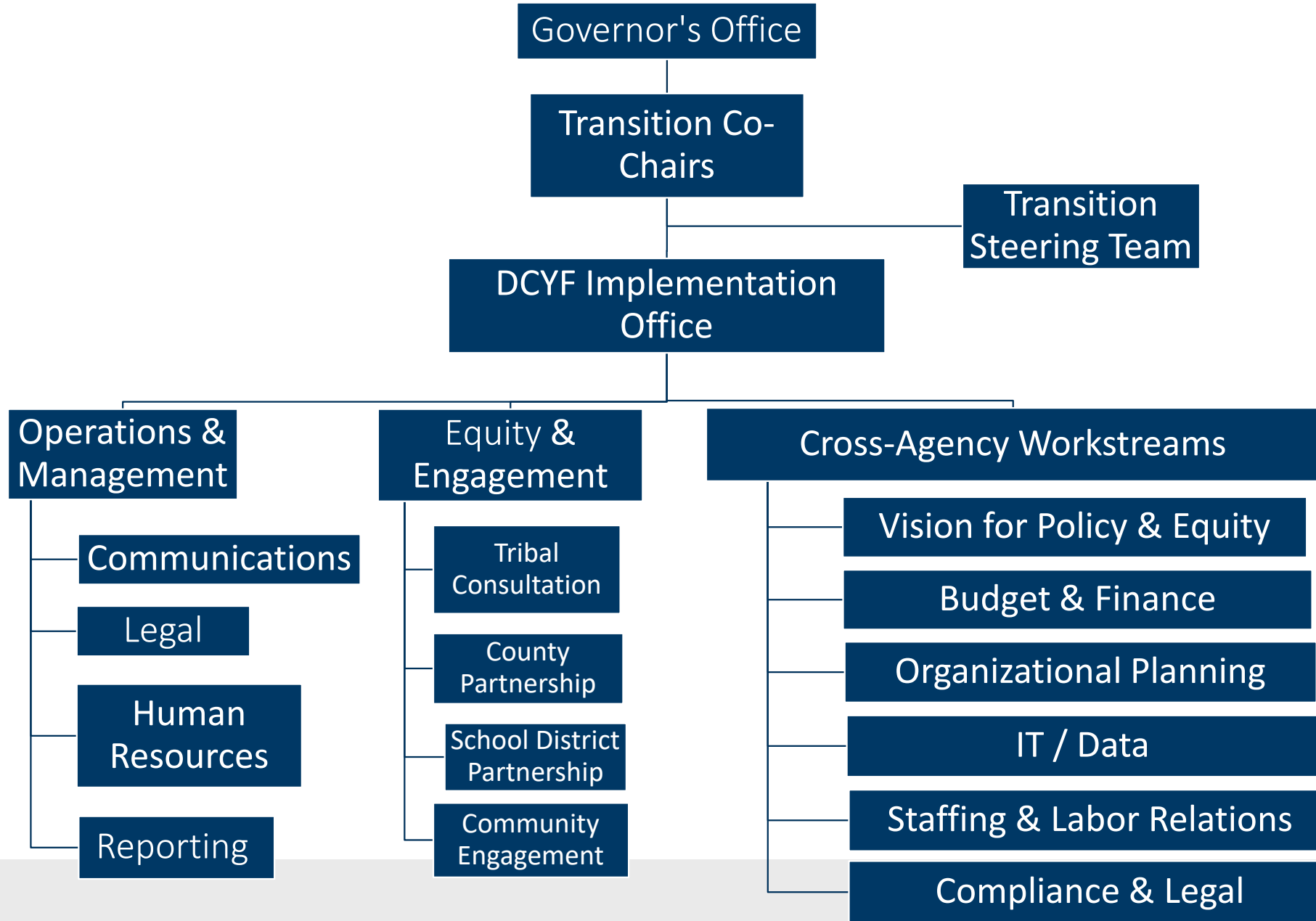
Program from the Child and Family Health Division at Minnesota Department of Health:

- Help Me Connect

Planning Timeline for Program Transfer



Planned program transfers may be delayed or cancelled to prevent service disruption or ensure adequate infrastructure is in place for program success.



MMB Implementation Office Organization

- **Legislative Session**

- Draft legislation (“Revisor bill”) was submitted to the chairs and ranking minority members of relevant legislative committees and divisions with necessary changes to Minnesota Statutes to facilitate the transfer, authority, and operational functions to establish DCYF. The bill has passed both the House and Senate and will be signed by the Governor.

- **Transition Report**

- A [transition report](#) from the commissioner of MMB, on behalf of the Implementation Office, was submitted to the Legislature, outlining planning, engagement efforts, and recommendations for the transfer of programs to the new agency.

- **Jobs at DCYF**

- Executive-level positions for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families will be posted to Minnesota Careers and Self-Service on a rolling basis beginning this spring. The first three positions accepting applications are [Tribal Director](#), [Chief Financial Officer](#), and [Government Relations Director](#).

- **A Focus on Culture**

- The Implementation Office has contracted with the Sankofa Leadership Network to leverage their expertise and capacity to foster culture, support leadership with a focus on change management, and engage in equity grounding to include intentionality around racial equity in the new agency.

Engagement and Partnership

External Engagement

- **Purpose:** Center the experiences of and recommendations from the children and families accessing programs and services identified to transfer to the Department of Children, Youth and Families - and the community leaders, advocates, and impacted state agency leaders who serve them - in the transition process.
- **Objectives:** Connecting, Informing, Amplifying, Recommending
- **Strategy:** DCYF IO Engagement team + consultants with deep tribal, education, and county expertise + leveraging expertise of internal partners (ex: directors/program leads from impacted agencies) + external partnerships (families, providers, education professionals, school districts, education associations, community-based organizations, counties, tribal nations, etc.).
- **Tracking/Sharing:**
 - Engagement activities are being documented and analyzed for inclusion in legislative report (due March 1) and shared on a regular, ongoing basis with workstreams, Steering Team, and leaders/staff from impacted agencies. External feedback is also being compiled to share recommendations/outcomes with eventual DCYF leadership (July 2024 –July 2025).
 - Feedback loops with external partners (ongoing).
- **Activities**
 - Community Listening Sessions (virtual and in person); site visits; townhalls; community meetings, etc. – ongoing for duration of transition.

2023 Engagement Highlights

- **141** engagements with community, Tribes, county, and impacted agency program staff/directors
 - **10** Tribal consultations
 - **12** County meetings
 - **5** monthly agency director meetings
- **13** engagements with labor partners
- **3,000+** engaged across all meetings, listening sessions, visits
- **12** listening sessions with more than **550** current early learning, community and family education, and child care professionals
- **29** meetings and listening sessions with more than **700** representing the needs of children with disabilities and mental health diagnoses

Organizational Structure Engagement Themes

- **Importance of a structure that allows for collaboration and coordination:**
 - Structuring departments and divisions in a way that allows for cross-cutting sharing of information, best practices and ways of doing work, and relationship building.
 - Breaking down silos, allowing for cross-division collaboration and coordination, including through the creation of intentional spaces for cross-functional teams and sharing, integration, and shared learning.
- **Importance of taking advantage of this historic opportunity to improve how services are delivered and received:**
 - User experience for partners (counties, Tribes, schools, community) and families should be considered throughout design.
 - Focus on prevention services.
- **Interest in an office of innovation, centralized research and data:**
 - Need explicit attention to research, data, evidence-based practices and policy.
- **DCYF needs visible leadership and coordination of:**
 - Mental health services across state agencies to elevate and align priorities.
 - Systems and services across state agencies for children who have disabilities and their families.
 - Work to close disparities, with specific focus on the most significant disparities for Black and Indigenous children, across early learning, health and well-being, and youth justice.
 - Navigation for families, community partners, and service providers.
 - Equity strategies, leadership with an equity office.
 - Indian policy through a Tribal office.
- **Youth voice and priorities should be elevated.**
- **Desire for visionary leadership.**

High-level Draft Org Structure

The engagement process and resulting themes led to the development of a high-level org structure for the new Department of Children, Youth, and Families. This high-level structure includes:

- Youth Services and Economic Development
 - *Youth Justice Office, Office of Restorative Practices, Office of Economic Opportunity, After School Community Learning Grant*
- Family Well-Being
 - *Economic Assistance and Employment Supports Division, Child Support*
- Early Childhood
 - *Child Care Services, Early Learning Services, Help Me Connect*
- Child Safety and Permanency
 - *Child Safety and Permanency*
- Leaders in coordination around mental health, children with disabilities, Black children and youth, and family and community navigation of state programs.
- Equity Office
- Tribal Policy Office
- Office of Innovation
 - *Data, evaluation, research, strategic planning, integration of work, collaboration and coordination across the agency*
- Operations, including, but not limited to:
 - *Budget and Finance, Communications, Compliance, External Relations (including county and community relations), Human Resources, Information Technology, Legal, Licensing, Program Integrity*

Organizational Structure

- After reviewing the engagement themes and high-level structure ideas, what do you want us to be aware of?

Leadership Skills and Competencies

- What is important for the Governor to know related to hiring of the Commissioner?
- What executive leadership attributes are important for the Commissioner and the leadership team?
- What do you believe will be the core competencies and skillsets necessary to lead the agency?
- What are hot button issues related to the programs at DCYF that the leaders should have expertise in?
- Who are the partnerships and relationships most critically important for the leadership?

Examples of executive roles: Commissioner, Deputy & Assistant Commissioners, Chief Financial Officer, Communications Director, Compliance Officer, County Relations Director, CBTO, Engagement Director, Equity Director, General Counsel, Human Resources Director, Legislative Director, Tribal Relations Director

Discussion Questions cont.

Access and Navigation

- At the center of DCYF is the goal of achieving more equitable outcomes for children, youth and families. Building on the existing efforts of agencies, what investments, practices, policies, and priorities need to change to improve the lives of historically underserved and marginalized children, youth and families?
- Tell us about your experiences – or the experiences of those you serve – when it comes to accessing early childhood programs at the state.
 - What challenges have you/they faced?
 - Were you/they able to address them?
 - What would have made the experiences easier for you/them?

Staying Connected

- Connecting with families is integral to our engagement plan. Do you have suggestions on where the engagement team should be going to collect input from families?
- How would you like to remain engaged with the DCYF Implementation Office, as we move forward as the transition progresses? Are there upcoming events/meetings the engagement team should attend?

Thank you!

Connect with us

Website: [DCYF Implementation / Minnesota Management and Budget \(MMB\) \(mn.gov\)](https://mn.gov/dcyf-implementation/)

Newsletter - [Subscribe](#) to receive updates

Email: DCYF.Implementation.MMB@state.mn.us