

STRATEGIC PLAN: 2019 - 2021

OUR VISION

Vermont's children and youth live free from abuse, neglect and delinquency – in resilient families that are supported and valued by their communities.

OUR MISSION

We engage families, foster and kin caregivers, partner agencies and the community to increase safety and law abidance for Vermont's children and youth.

We achieve our mission by working with families to:

- ➔ Keep children and youth safe
- ➔ Keep youth free from delinquent behaviors

And if that is not possible:

Caring for children and youth in DCF or conditional custody and attending to their well-being, while working towards safe reunification.

And if that is not possible:

Achieving other forms of permanency for children and youth in DCF or conditional custody by providing them with safe, supportive and lifelong connections.

OUR VALUES

We value equity, inclusion and justice. We believe in the diversity of thoughts, beliefs and experiences and embrace all people and their human differences.

Relationships are built on trust, collaboration and communication. We strive to resolve conflict in a way that strengthens connections and repairs and restores relationships.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

Children, Youth and Families

- Deserve to be safe, heard and connected to their communities
- Know themselves best and their expertise should be valued
- Are viewed in the context of their culture and community
- Can grow and change with support and adequate resources
- Are active participants and partners in the process

Staff

- Offer their dedication and commitment, which are essential in carrying out our mission
- Provide quality work that is strengths-based, trauma-informed and influenced by research

Foster and Kin Families

- Are primary partners in ensuring the well-being of children and youth
- Deserve timely training, communication and support

Communities

- Are essential to keeping children safe and to promoting healthy families
- Collaborate to meet the holistic needs of children, youth and families

WHAT WE DO

- Operate a 24-hour Child Protection Hotline
- Investigate and assess reports of abuse and neglect
- Engage families to meet their goals to increase safety
- Seek court involvement when required to keep children and communities safe
- Supervise youth on probation and help repair harm caused by their behavior
- Identify extended family and community supports
- Support safe placements for children and youth
- License and regulate foster homes, residential treatment programs and child placing and adoptions agencies
- Achieve permanency options that are in the best interest of children and youth
- Collaborate within districts, across districts and with central office
- Partner with service providers and other state agencies
- Operate Woodside, the state's only secure facility that serves youth exhibiting harmful behaviors

Goal 1: Review and clarify scope of work to better align with existing resources and priorities.

Strategies

- A. Review current child safety intervention practices to ensure alignment with our vision, mission and values.
- B. Review family support case practice to ensure alignment with our vision, mission and values.
- C. Review current truancy practices to ensure alignment with our vision, mission and values.
- D. Review impact of recent legislative and policy changes related to our juvenile justice population.

Goal 2: Support continuous improvement and reflection of the work.

Strategies

- A. Engage district staff around continuous improvement of practice, including the implementation of a strong culture of safety.
- B. Examine and define expectations for staff to promote consistency across districts.
- C. Develop and apply processes that support effective implementation of new practice.
- D. Create opportunities to engage and solicit input from families, youth and children to inform policy and improve practice.
- E. Review performance and outcome data and contract measurements to inform practice and resource needs.
- F. Evaluate current contracts to determine the most effective ways to utilize existing funds.

Goal 3: Grow and support a more resilient workforce and improve retention.

Strategies

- A. Increase access to high quality and effective professional development opportunities for all FSD positions.
- B. Offer relevant onboarding training and mentoring specific to positions.
- C. Highlight resource needs that impact Family Services worker's ability to meet the demands of the work.
- D. Address coverage needs for Family Services workers.
- E. Improve access to different levels of supervision and support.
- F. Improve ways to support staff well-being.

Goal 4: Develop effective communication strategies for staff, community and contracted employees.

Strategies

- A. Identify and implement effective ways staff receive information they need to do their jobs and feel connected to the larger division.
- B. Create intentional focused messages for the legislature, partners, communities and families.

Goal 5: Engage community agencies, contracted workers and other state entities to leverage resources to support children and families.

Strategies

- A. Identify & implement ways to create stronger partnerships with community and government agencies and use a shared vision of Vermont's child welfare system.
- B. Engage and strengthen relationships with other state agencies to identify ways to share resources to support families.
- C. Create activities that increase judges, lawyers and GALs understanding of our policy, practice and resources that guide our work.
- D. Engage legal partners to create a courtroom environment that is mutually respectful and psychologically safe for Family Services workers.

Goal 6: Recruit, develop, support and retain kinship and foster homes as guided by the Diligent Recruitment Plan.

Strategies

- A. Design and implement effective processes and resources that recruit, develop, support and retain kinship and foster homes.
- B. Increase the availability and capacity of kinship and foster homes that meet the diverse needs of Vermont's children and youth.

Goal 7: Improve technology and business processes.

Strategies

- A. Highlight the division's need for new IT systems and resources.
- B. Identify and implement ways to improve case work processes.
- C. Explore and implement ways to improve business processes.