

# County Social Services in North Dakota

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New Officials Academy

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# Purpose of County Social Services

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- To serve as the legal designee of the Department of Human Service to provide quality, effective and efficient social services to the vulnerable citizens of North Dakota.

# Early & Strong Traditions of Service

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- County Poor Relief - 1<sup>st</sup> Territorial Assembly (1862)
- Continued in 1<sup>st</sup> ND Constitution (1889)
- Great Depression (1930s):
  - Early federal programs enacted
  - 250,000 of the states 630,000 residents received assistance
  - 1935 – 1<sup>st</sup> state dollars appropriated for poor relief



# From the 1862 to Today

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- **Impactful Changes**

- Great Depression, War of Poverty, Entitlement Programs, Child Welfare mandates, Title XX Programs, Older Americans Acts, ICWA, Welfare Reform, Health Care Reform, etc.
- State funding changes, mill structure changes, unfunded mandates, state legislative changes, availability of supportive service, technological changes
- Demographic shifts, family composition changes, societal norm changes, prevalence of alcohol and substance abuse, populations shifts, etc.

# Today's County Social Services

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- **Federal/State Influence:**
  - Vastly Federal/State Programs
  - Program costs (benefits) and Administrative costs (compensation and operations) are funded by state and federal funds
  - State and federal law, regulation, policy and direction must be upheld & greatly influence services



# Today's County Social Services...

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- **County Influence:**

- County Commission sets budgetary appropriation
- Local services must meet local need
- Simply Put: We are county employees administering state and federal programs at the local level receiving funding by the state

# Social Service Redesign

- **SB 2206** **2015 and 2017 Sessions**

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- Property-relief bill that transferred the responsibility for funding the program and administrative costs of operating county social services to the state
- Pilot projects and study focusing on how to redesign the human service delivery system for the next 100 years.



# Social Service Redesign

- **SB 2124: Currently being considered (2019 Session)**
  - Significantly amended in the Senate
  - Resulting in more county-friendly provisions
  - 19 proposed zones that will collaboratively with DHS and each other to meet citizen need
  - Local employment and control
  - Increased DHS communication to Zone Board
  - Quick Timeline – Step 1: December 1, 2019



# ND County Social Services

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## Four Key Areas



# 1. Children and Family Services

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- Child Abuse & Neglect Assessment & Case Management
- Foster Care Case Management
- Early Childhood Services Licensing
- Foster Care Licensing
- Wraparound Case Management Services
- Family Preservation Services
- Subsidized Adoption and Guardianship





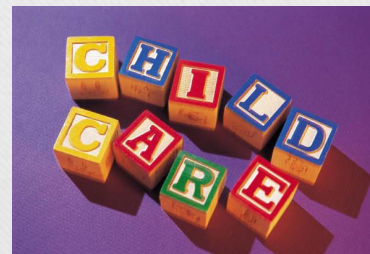
## 2. Home and Community Based Services



- Case Management Services
- Homemaker Services
- Chore Services
- Personal Care
- Non-Medical Transportation Services
- Adaptive Equipment
- QSP Services

### 3. Economic Assistance

- TANF
- Food Assistance (SNAP)
- Child Care Assistance
- Medical Assistance (Medicaid)
- Medicaid Expansion
- Home Heating Assistance (LIHEAP)
- Emergency services
- Foster Care Payments
- Basic Care





## 4. Administration

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Support Services

Budgetary and Fiscal Administration

Agency Administration

Employee Supervision

Oversight and local policy administration



# A Balancing Act:

## Roles of the Department of Human Services and County Social Services

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- State Supervised:
  - Policy and parameter setting, directive in nature, merit system oversight and rule making, audit and reporting duty
- County Administered:
  - Local service, county employees, local decision-making/direction on how to deliver services, local access
  - Defined in: NDCC 50-01-2-03



# A Balancing Act: Role of the County Commission

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- **Final Appropriation Authority:**
- **Appoints Social Service Board Members**



# A Balancing Act: Role of the County Social Service Board

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- Duties are defined in NDCC 50-01.2
- Policy Making Board
- Ensures administration of programs
- A minimum of one County Commissioner must serve on the Social Service Board



# Social Services is a bit different...

## *Merit System Requirements*

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- Merit System Employees
  - Federally required *because* of federal programs administered
  - Impacts recruitment, selection, and promotion processes
  - Defines compensation scales
  - Qualification and training requirements
  - Performance-based retention
  - Fair treatment
  - Employee protections

# So What Does This Mean?

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- State system must be utilized for posting and filling positions
- State classification system applies job class, grade, and minimum qualifications
- State pay scale grade (minimums and maximums) applies for all county social service positions
- Impact of state policy/rules apply for personnel and human resources on local policy and practice
- Disciplinary process is subject to Progressive Discipline and appeals proceedings



# Serving the vulnerable and the poor from birth to grave

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- Infants
- Children
- Adolescents
- College Students/Young Adults
- Individuals
- Families
- Elderly
- Indigent deceased
- Disabled
- Medically frail
- Those without support systems
- Vulnerable and abused
- Low income employed individuals and families
- Unemployed or under-employed



# Our Partners



- Auditor/Treasurer
- County Commission
- County Social Service Board
- Law enforcement
- Public Health
- State's Attorney
- Court System & Clerk's Office
- Health Care Facilities
- School Districts
- Long Term Care Facilities
- Private Providers: Village Family Services, Lutheran Social Services, PATH/AASK, Funeral Homes, etc.
- Job Service/Community Options
- Families
- Employers
- State Agencies
- Community Groups
- Food Banks
- Volunteer Organizations
- Faith Based Organizations
- And many more...