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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DCYF Director Ashley Deckert Announces Launch of Listening and Learning Tour

Listening and Learning Tour will focus on stakeholder and community engagement across the state of Rhode Island through a phased approach over the next 15-18 months.

[Providence, R.I.] (October 2, 2023) – Director Ashley Deckert from the RI Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) is announcing the launch of a Listening and Learning Tour starting in October 2023. The current timeline for the tour anticipates a 15-18 month roll out approach which will include five phases and ultimately inform the development of a five-year strategic plan for DCYF.

According to Director Deckert, who joined DCYF in May of this year, the tour will provide staff, internal and external stakeholders, community members, as well as the families and children DCYF serves, with a forum where they can express themselves openly about their experiences with the Department.

“Authentic engagement is essential to cultivating an informed, supportive, and family-centered child and family wellbeing system. My goal for this Listening and Learning Tour is to gain a better understanding about the needs of Rhode Island children, youth, and families, and improve public perception and trust,” says Deckert.

“The goal of this tour is to help reinforce DCYF’s commitment to the children, youth, and families that we serve by centering youth and family voice to address any challenges the Department faces now and in the future. It will serve to drive innovative best practices and provide the framework necessary for DCYF to develop and implement a five-year strategic plan which includes actionable goals and benchmarks,” Deckert adds.

The timeline for the tour is as follows:

<p>Phase I Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023 <p>Phase II Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase II a – Internal DCYF Tour: October 1, 2023- December 31, 2023 Phase II b – Community Tour: January 1, 2024- May 31, 2024 Phase II c – Open Forums: June 1, 2023-July 31, 2024 	<p>Phase III Evaluation & Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> August 1, 2024-September 30, 2024 <p>Phase IV Strategic Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 1, 2024 –December 31, 2024 <p>Phase V Maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 1, 2025-December 31, 2030
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Later this fall, DCYF will share more information with the public with dates and times for the more public phases of the Listening & Learning Tour.

About DCYF

The mission of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families is to partner with families and communities to raise safe and healthy children and youth in a caring environment and to engage respectfully and effectively with people of all races, ethnicities, cultures, classes, genders, sexual orientations, and faiths in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of all individuals, families, tribes, and communities, and protects and preserves the dignity of each.

DCYF has three major operational divisions: Children's Behavioral Health Services, Child Welfare (including child protective services, family services, and permanency support), and Juvenile Corrections (including the Rhode Island Training School and juvenile probation). The Department supports more than 2,500 children and their families both in the community and in DCYF care, and indirectly serves thousands more through community-based programs.

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