

2024 PRIORITIES

Well-Being

Establish a proactive child and family well-being system for all Rhode Island children and families by centering youth and family voice, expanding preventative and in-home supports, and improving outcomes.

- Improve rates and support for kinship caregivers and traditional foster parents.
- Partner with children, youth, families, and others with lived experience to understand how existing policies and practices may be creating harm rather than strengthening families.
- Improve collaboration amongst community partners in all sectors – including those with lived experience.
- Focus on improving educational and physical well-being of youth in care.
- Integrate a well-funded system of care (SOC) that promotes innovative in-home supports.

Transition

Focus on transitioning foster youth into adulthood, with special concentration on marginalized youth in foster care.

- Collect SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression) data in an effective and competent manner where all youth feel safe.
- Develop written policies, procedures, and trainings that protect marginalized (LBTQI+, BIPOC, Pregnant & Parenting, and those with intellectual and developmental delays) youth and adults from harassment and discrimination.
- Provide support to improve educational outcomes, workforce development and job placement opportunities, prevent transition into homelessness, and pathways to economic security.
- Address over-prescription and misuse of psychotropic medication.
- Incentivize the use and assist in coordination of mental health services.

Workforce

Engage workforce by building a well-resourced, well-trained, and supportive organizational culture.

- Revamp and enhance training and continued education.
- Develop comprehensive workforce development strategies.
- Work to identify creative, actionable strategies that attract and retain a qualified workforce.
- Commit to establishing and maintaining manageable caseloads, through safely reducing the number of children in foster care.
- Building and maintaining a healthy, equitable work environment and culture.

Racial Justice

Advance race equity by identifying and working to eliminate systemic racist practices in our child and family well-being system.

- Continue to develop services and materials translated in the family's preferred language.
- Integrate race equity language in contracts, service provision, policies, and procedures.
- Identify and work to eliminate racial and ethnic disproportionality at the five most critical decision points in our child and family well-being system.
- Initiate root-cause analysis to determine why disparate outcomes exist.
- Ensure the Department's executive leadership has, at minimum, proportionate representation by people of color as its workforce.

Continuum of Care

Develop a strong continuum of care to include improved access to an array of therapeutic supports and services.

- Initiate and implement a residential monitoring unit.
- Develop a strategic plan specific to timely access to residential treatment, evidence-based alternatives to residential treatment, therapeutic foster care, and specialized foster care and improve placement capacity.
- Create a continuum of care under the larger systems of care scope.
- Ensure procured services meet identified needs, assess gaps in services with intent to procure based on a rate setting methodology, and increase accountability to service provision.
- Prioritize and invest in prevention, strategically reallocate resources, and deliver a continuum of community-based supports that meet families' unique needs and promote efforts to help them thrive.

CONTINUED EFFORTS OF 2023

- Finalize the service array procurement.
- Achieve accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA).
- Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) procurement and implementation.
- Proactive engagement in the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC) expansion.
- Listening & Learning Tour and Strategic Plan development.
- Continued Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) assessment and implementation.