



# VISION: NEXT ACHIEVEMENTS

2020 - 2026

## Overview

In early 2021, DCDHS published Vision: Next, a five-year vision shaped by listening sessions with staff, community partners, clients, and other stakeholders. Across 2020–2026, the Department advanced five priorities focused on racial justice, organizational culture, modernization, partnerships, and systemic solutions.

This document presents a high-level overview of some notable achievements under Vision: Next. For a more complete review of DCDHS strategic priorities, initiatives, and tactics, view the full Vision: Next, Reflection report at: <https://dhs-stratplan.connect2dane.com> (you need to be in Citrix).

**Priority 1 — Advance Racial Justice** *DCDHS envisioned advancing racial justice through programs we fund, the services and resources we provide, and recruitment/retention of staff of color. We made advancements in racial justice through training and creating internal language access functions.*

- Enhanced organizational commitment to racial equity through a department-wide training partnership with YWCA in which all M-team leaders and about two-thirds of supervisors/managers participated. Staff continue to hold conversations to stay grounded in their learning.
- Supported mandated reporters in Dane County to apply a racial justice lens to decision-making through trainings on mandated reporter legal obligations, how implicit bias can influence reporting decisions, and how to support families before they reach a point of crisis.
- Improved language access and communication effectiveness for all clients across all programs. The Department now has department-wide language access policies and processes, staff to provide translation and interpretation, resources to help staff on phones and at front desks identify communication needs, and a process for continuous improvement.

**Priority 2 — Promote Organizational Culture** *DCDHS set out to create, strengthen, and support a culture where employees feel empowered, respected, and valued. Employee voice was amplified through putting staff in the driver seat of strategic work and listening through an ongoing culture survey; DCDHS also focused on employee-led opportunities for support, training, and recognition.*

- Engaged employees in policy and process development through Strategic Tactic Teams, Buzz Sessions, tactic workgroups, and other department and division work.
- Increased accountability and transparency on culture strengths and areas of opportunity through the implementation of climate surveys in the spring of every even year.
- Expanded staff support for challenging work situations through an enterprise-wide peer connection approach, Colleague Support Teams.
- Expanded training and professional development awareness and resources for staff.
- Implemented employee-driven Peer Awards program to recognize employees Department wide.

**Priority 3 — Modernize Internal Infrastructure** *DCDHS aspired to enhance systems and infrastructure to support data driven decision-making and effective collaboration. Several databases and other computer-based systems were launched to replace outdated processes. Planning began and continues for the implementation of an EHR.*

- Established project management resources and a project portfolio plan to improve transparency and prioritization of work.
- Expanded data and evaluation capacity, including community program and APS databases and a move from SurveyMonkey to Qualtrics for improved survey design and external data collection.
- Strengthened communications infrastructure by hiring a Communications Manager who advanced department-wide communication planning and by launching a staff-designed and managed Intranet.
- Improved contract management and internal processes to support data-driven decisions and cross-division collaboration.
- Planned for the purchase and launch of an Electronic Health Record (EHR) which will enable the Department to better share data, refer clients, measure outcomes, and collaborate with partners.

**Priority 4 — Strengthen Our Partnerships** *DCDHS committed to building trusting collaborative partnerships to meet community needs in innovative and effective ways. We leaned into this through strategic redesigns and increasing access to critical information.*

- Launched a new public-facing website aligned with the Dane County website redesign to improve public access to information.
- Opened the Youth Justice and Prevention facility—centralizing youth justice-related services and supporting nearly 1,000 youth annually—codesigned with youth, staff, and local artists.
- Expanded partner communications, including newsletters and media assets to strengthen engagement and recruitment.
- Implemented communication strategies for high-impact changes (reorganization, end of public health emergency, end of rental assistance) to support clarity for partners and clients.

**Priority 5 — Innovate and Build Systemic Solutions** *DCDHS desired to build solutions that reduce multisystem involvement through culturally competent and person-centered services. We reorganized to leverage expertise and grew programs that provide preventive services.*

- Advanced planning for a behavioral health triage and restoration center through contracted design/operations recommendations.
- Completed a department reorganization that created the Behavioral Health Division to better align mental health and substance use services for Dane County residents.
- Built staff awareness of programs and resources across the Department to enable appropriate referrals and warm handoffs.
- Built or expanded programs that connects individuals to preventive services and resources at the time they are needed. This included things like the Hoarder Clean up effort, Doubled-up pilot program, youth crisis stabilization to replace CCF, Outpatient Open Network, expansion of Early Childhood Zones, and more.