



# VISION: NEXT ACHIEVEMENTS

2020 - 2026

## Notable Department and Division Achievements

In early 2021, DCDHS published [Vision: Next](#), the Department's vision and priorities for the next five years. In mid- to late 2020, we spent several months listening to staff, community partners, clients, and other stakeholders. Those conversations informed the development of **five priorities**, which the Department—together with our staff and stakeholders—has advanced over the past five years.

M-Team, the Department's executive leadership team, is proud of what our Department and divisions have accomplished and highlights key successes below<sup>1</sup>. Thank you to our colleagues, staff, partners, and collaborators. Your hard work and dedication have strengthened our services and advanced our priorities. **Dane County Department of Human Services is better because of you!**

**Priority 1 – Advance Racial Justice:** Advance racial justice in Dane County through the programs we fund, the services and resources we provide, and how we recruit and retain staff of color.

- **(2021, CYF)** Provided training on mandated reporting, including legal obligations and how implicit bias can influence reporting decisions, to hundreds of professionals across Dane County. Training included information about racial disparities in Dane County CPS and how professionals can support families before they reach a point of crisis.
- **(2021)** Partnered with YWCA to offer learning opportunities for DCDHS staff and management. Over three years, all M-Team members and approximately two-thirds of supervisors and managers participated. A group of staff participants continue to meet once per month for Embodied Racial Justice work, to stay grounded in their learning.
- **(2021)** Developed baseline measures of [staff diversity](#); established processes for compiling and monitoring data; and improved communications to increase transparency. DCDHS staff are more racially diverse than the communities we serve and increasingly reflect the racial diversity of our clients. We continue to recruit, hire, and retain BIPOC staff at high rates.
- **(2021, BPHCC)** Maintained the highest rate of BIPOC employees within DCDHS at Badger Prairie Healthcare Center.
- **(2022) Equitable language access across DCDHS services**
  - (2021–2025, DAS) Launched a successful partnership with Madison Language Co-op to provide language services for partner agencies offering Children's Long-Term Support and Birth to 3 services, expanding language access for families whose primary language is not English.

<sup>1</sup> The date in parenthesis is the year the Tactic or initiative started. Unless otherwise stated, DCDHS has continued these tactics/initiatives, or they have otherwise become part of the way we operate. If there is a year range, the Tactic started and ended in those years respectively. Some parentheses include a division abbreviation because that tactic/initiative was a division-level effort, rather than an effort across the entire Department.

- (2022) Developed written policies, practices, and procedures to provide effective, equitable, respectful, and high-quality [language access services](#).
- (2023) Hired a Department Language Access Coordinator to develop a Department-wide, systemic approach to language accessibility policies and procedures.
- (2023) Built and developed a process to maintain a roster of external interpreters that includes streamlined and clear invoicing on a schedule for retention of existing partners, streamlined recruitment, and ensures consistent onboarding.
- (2023, EAWS) Revamped lobby services by increasing language availability and implementing improved screening practices for customers who need services in a language other than English.
- (2024) Launched an online tool to receive requests for interpretation and translation. The system automatically alerts the Language Access team when a request is made and creates templates for completing follow-up steps.
- (2024) Added Language Line access from computer desktops, and made Language Line available to iPhones, of all DCDHS employees – making video language services available for the entire department, a dramatic improvement for clients who have limited English proficiency.
- (2025) Added 8 iPads with appropriate stands across DCDHS divisions to support language services via video provided by Language Line. The customized experience now supports clients who have to walk through facilities, ensuring that the iPad stand with the video interpreter can travel with the client.
- (2025) Added and trained staff on simultaneous translation technology for large group settings that can support multiple languages with live, in-person interpreters.
- (2025) Hired a Hmong Language Access Coordinator and two Spanish-language interpreters for the Department authorized in the 2025 operating budget.
- (2025, EAWS) Increased the number of bilingual staff by 10 since 2022.
- (2026) Finalized the extensive, in-depth procedures manual that incorporates two bilingual coordinator positions and two in-house interpreters, for DCDHS Language Access Services. Published all to a DCDHS website resource page to support the community need.
- **(2022, BH)** Opened Spanish and Hmong Language Lines for the [Behavioral Health Resource Center](#), allowing consumers to speak directly with a staff person in their preferred language when seeking behavioral health services and resources.
- **(2022, CYF)** Empowered youth and guardians to shape the programs that serve them through the [Youth Justice Program \(YJP\) Satisfaction Survey](#). By evaluating access, culture, engagement, and outcomes, YJP identified and implemented improvements, including updated outcome metrics reflecting direct family feedback and increased survey participation.
- **(2022, PEI)** Provided [Joining Forces for Families](#), [Community Restorative Court](#), and [Immigration Affairs](#) services in Spanish, expanding reach to the Latine community.
- **(2023)** Created and launched a network of behavioral health outpatient counseling providers to increase access and choice for underserved populations.
- **(2024, EAWS)** Launched an EAWS Cultural Committee to celebrate diversity, inclusion, and cultural expression—and to define and reinforce shared values.

- **(2025, EAWS)** Expanded presence at tabled community events to strengthen engagement with communities of color.

**Priority 2 - Promote Organizational Culture:** Create, strengthen, and support an organizational culture that exemplifies our core values in which employees feel empowered, respected, and valued.

- **(2021)** Developed and launched [employee workgroups](#) to recommend 2022 strategic priority tactics and to monitor progress on 2021 tactics. DCDHS continued centering employee voice through Buzz Sessions (2022–2024), Strategic Tactic Teams (2021–2024), and multiple tactic workgroups (2021–present).
- **(2021, EAWS)** Implemented “Resilience and Trauma-Informed Care” (RTIC) across the consortia. RTIC principles now inform leadership decisions, communications with staff, and how performance data are shared.
- **(2021, EAWS)** Implemented a Leadership Academy for training and professional development.
- **(2022)** Developed and implemented a culture survey to measure key aspects of organizational culture and inform tactics under this priority. DCDHS contracted with Energage in 2022; findings were shared with M-Team to identify division-level opportunities. In 2024, DCDHS contracted with Qualtrics to develop a similar tool with lower ongoing costs, making the tool available at no cost to DCDHS in 2026. Information was shared with M-team, Department Managers and Supervisors, and [all DCDHS staff](#).
- **(2022)** Developed an enterprise-wide approach to supporting staff through challenging work situations, through connection with trained colleagues/peers.
  - **(2021, CYF)** Enhanced existing peer-support program to support social workers and SSS staff.
  - **(2023, EAWS)** Implemented Capital PEER, a consortia-wide resource for staff who need additional support in challenging work.
  - **(2024)** Developed and launched the department-wide [Colleague Support Teams](#).
- **(2022–2023)** Piloted learning opportunities aligned with Vision: Next priorities, including RESJ-themed Book Clubs and Movie Clubs. Due to minimal participation and a high time burden for the project lead, these activities were discontinued in 2023.
- **(2022-2024, PEI)** Conducted safety reviews and upgrades for all stand-alone Joining Forces for Families offices.
- **(2022, EAWS)** Completed a comprehensive building remodel to improve staff safety and customer service.
- **(2023)** Launched the [DCDHS Peer Awards Program](#). The program is staff-created and staff-led, with support from M-Team. To date, 207 unique employees have been nominated. The list of nominees and the stories of lottery-based winners are shared with all staff quarterly.
- **(2023)** Increased accessibility and collaboration by hosting informal, in-person “M-Team Live” conversations at DCDHS offices across the county. After strong initial attendance followed by a decline, M-Team discontinued the series in 2024.
- **(2024)** Strengthened division training and professional development. Built capacity to offer Department-specific training.

- **(2024)** Developed a vision for Department-wide training: Employees are the backbone resource of DCDHS. To grow a robust, engaged, and well-prepared workforce, the Department prioritizes training as a part of professional development and invests resources to ensure every team member can reach their full potential.
- **(2024, EAWS)** Expanded leadership development through a “Call for Proposals” for subject matter experts for the 2024 staff meeting, including professional development in proposal writing, public speaking, project management, storytelling, presentation design, and PowerPoint skills.
- **(2024, EAWS)** Held a half-day leadership retreat for lead staff, supervisors, and managers focused on servant leadership, crucial conversations, and trauma-informed agency practices.
- **(2025)** Developed the [Department Training Resources](#) Intranet page to provide a centralized resource for all staff to better understand the training available to them, the processes for requesting training, and to share process and software how-to’s.
- **(2025, PEI)** Launched quarterly all-staff training events in response to identified need and with staff input on content and facilitators.
- **(2026)** Developed and launched department-specific trainings in NeoGov Learn.
- **(2024, EAWS)** Established a Safety Committee to strengthen staff input on Job Center safety and security.
- **(2025, EAWS)** Created bilingual staff meetings so staff with specialized skills and perspectives can share information and resources to better serve customers.
- **(2026, EAWS)** Relaunched scorecards with critical staff input. Scorecards support proactive conversations that recognize high performers and provide coaching and support where needed.

**Priority 3 - Modernize Internal Infrastructure:** Enhance computer systems, program evaluation infrastructure, contract management processes, and communications strategy to enable and facilitate data driven decision-making and effective collaboration.

- **(2021)** Created a repository of project management resources on network drives to support staff-led projects.
- **(2021)** Developed a project portfolio plan to improve transparency regarding ongoing and requested projects and to support prioritization.
- **(2022-2024, PEI)** Launched databases for all Community Programs to collect client information and make data driven decisions.
- **(2022, P&E)** Transitioned survey administration from SurveyMonkey to Qualtrics, enabling more customizable surveys, improved mobile optimization, and stronger data collection from external partners.
- **(2022)** Hired a Communications Manager to strengthen internal and external communications infrastructure.
- **(2022, DAS)** Created an APS database using a low-code solution to centralize APS records, enabling cross-team visibility and more timely records management. Launch is planned for 2026.
- **(2023)** Identified and engaged a consultant to conduct an IT modernization review and evaluation.

- **(2023, P&E)** Converted the paper-based [711 form](#) to an electronic form for online completion. This enabled trend analysis over time, faster access to data for contract managers, more consistent metrics, and an easier process for partners.
- **(2023, BH)** Launched an electronic monthly form for CCS contracted agencies to report service openings. The resulting list is distributed across the CCS network and posted to the [CCS website](#) to better connect participants to available services.
- **(2023)** Transitioned the [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) process to an online system, Open Gov.
- **(2024, Admin)** Launched an [online tool](#) to receive interpretation and translation requests from All DCDHS staff. The system automatically notifies the Language Access team and generates templates for follow-up steps. This work was done by the Language Access team in collaboration with Planning and Evaluation.
- **(2024)** Designed, documented governance for, and built a [DCDHS-specific DCInet site](#) to better share resources with employees.
- **(2024, PEI)** Moved the Dane County Youth Assessment in-house, freeing up money to explore the possibility of an external facing data dashboard to optimize community use of the data.
- **(2024, CYF & PEI)** Transitioned CPS, YJ, and OHC from other digital or paper client records to unified use of Traverse (an enterprise document management system) to strengthen coordination and simplify signature collection in the field.
- **(2024, P&E)** Loaded statewide CCAP data (including eviction history) into a database to support future program evaluation. This data will enable DCDHS to answer questions about recidivism without manually searching for each client online.
- **(2025)** Implemented PMO portfolio-prioritized requests, including EHR procurement, car reservation system procurement, and employee mileage software procurement.
- **(2025, EAWS)** Implemented Humanity scheduling software, a web-based module to support staff scheduling and coordination.
- **(2026)** Procured an Electronic Health Record (EHR) system.
- **(2026, EAWS)** Conducted a succession planning process across the EAWS leadership team to identify and mitigate risks related to loss of institutional knowledge due to retirements.
- **(2026, P&E)** Created a [how-to resource](#) to help potential vendors understand DCDHS procurement processes and a brief overview of how to write quality proposals.

**Priority 4 - Strengthen Our Partnerships:** Build trusting collaborative partnerships, internally and externally, to ensure the Department meets the needs of all communities in innovative and effective ways.

- **(2021)** Launched a new public-facing website, as part of a larger Dane County website redesign.
- **(2021–2023, CYF)** Remodeled the former Neighborhood Intervention Program building to create the Youth Justice and Prevention (YJP) Facility. This hub centralizes youth justice-related services under one roof and supports nearly 1,000 youth each year. The project engaged local artists, staff, and youth in designing the space, including a floral-themed mural representing stages of personal growth. The facility reflects a commitment to second chances and community-led prevention, keeping youth voice at the center of the work.
- **(2022 – 2025, PEI)** Launched a newsletter for Community Restorative Court Peacemakers and launched a [foster care recruitment video](#).

- **(2023)** Developed and implemented a communication strategy to help partners and clients understand high-impact events affecting DCDHS in 2023, including the Department reorganization, the end of the public health emergency, and the end of rental assistance.
- **(2023, PEI)** Expanded the geographic catchment areas in of the Early Childhood Zones in partnership with funders and provider agencies.
- **(2024)** Hired a full-time Procurement Officer to continue to enhance and professionalize the procurement process for DCDHS. The addition of this staff person created capacity to support and train contract managers to write high-quality RFPs, increasing the positive impact of purchased services across the county.
- **(2024)** Created a [DCDHS external-facing newsletter](#) to update contracted providers, community partners, and residents of new developments and highlight events happening at DCDHS.
- **(2024, BH)** Improved care coordination in the crisis services continuum by transitioning administrative oversight of DHS Chapter 34 requirements to DCDHS and clinical oversight to system partner Journey Mental Health Center. This created clearer communication pathways across providers and contributed to a successful DQA audit.
- **(2024, BH)** Established Community Access Partnership (CAP) locations for BHRC, where staff conduct outreach and assessments for behavioral health services at community sites such as The Beacon and Sunshine Place.
- **(2024, BH)** Established the [Dane Crisis Provider Network \(DCPN\)](#) to strengthen partnerships, communication, and shared vision across the crisis services continuum. Facilitated by DCDHS BH staff, DCPN includes provider leaders and offers training and guidance on administrative and clinical issues.
- **(2024–2025, DAS)** Elevated aging-related issues and invested in additional staffing and programming to support Dane County’s growing older adult population.
- **(2024, HAA)** Partnered with the City of Madison and the Dane County Homeless Services Consortium to help fund and provide staff assistance to develop our community’s latest five-year strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, [Dane Forward](#).
- **(2025, HAA)** Launched the Farmworker Housing Initiative, a 2024 budget initiative. In partnership with nINA Collaborative, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) staff conducted a study to elevate the voices and expertise of Dane County’s farmworkers, farmers, workers’ rights and housing advocates, Dane County municipalities, and more to craft recommendations for the development of farmworker housing in our communities.
- **(2025, HAA)** Developed the Dane County Urban Consortium’s latest [Five-Year Consolidated Plan](#), our roadmap for spending our CDBG/HOME funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development through extensive outreach with the public, elected officials, service agencies, and municipal staff of all Dane County communities outside of the City of Madison.
- **(2025, HAA)** Received a [\\$7 million grant](#) from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to accelerate affordable housing development in Dane County through the implementation of several key Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) recommendations (zoning reform, increased developer capacity, creation of new housing units). Implementation of the grant will depend on partnerships with several municipalities in Dane County.
- **(Ongoing, PEI)** Continued expansion of the Immigration Affairs Office.

## Priority 5 - Innovate and Build Systemic Solutions to Our Communities' Challenges:

Innovate and build systemic solutions that reduce multisystem involvement for individuals with behavioral health needs or facing housing instability, in which individuals receive culturally competent and person-centered services.

- **(2021)** Contracted with an entity to develop recommendations for the design and operation of a [behavioral health triage and restoration center](#).
- **(2021)** Launched Managers and Supervisors Roundtable meetings, every other month, to share information across divisions and units.
- **(2022–2023)** Planned and launched a Department reorganization that created the Behavioral Health Division to better align mental health and substance use treatment services for all Dane County residents. Previously, these services were administered across three divisions with different population focuses.
- **(2022)** Published a [Resource Directory](#) to provide staff with a foundational understanding of DCDHS services and resources, including key points of contact.
- **(2022–2024, DAS)** Partnered with community providers to complete significant hoarding clean-ups in 58 senior residences through strategic use of one-time ARPA funds. As a result, individuals were able to remain safely in their homes; those facing eviction were not evicted. These cases carried serious health and safety risks, and alternative placements or homelessness would have increased costs across other Dane County systems.
- **(2022-2025, PEI)** Added four Housing Program Leaders to Joining Forces for Families to provide targeted housing support and stabilization services to families.
- **(2023)** Developed a youth crisis stabilization model to replace the Children Come First (CCF) program and better support children with acute mental health needs.
- **(2023, BH)** Established the Outpatient Open Network to increase psychotherapy availability for residents without insurance; the network now includes three community providers.
- **(2023, HAA)** Implemented a [housing pilot](#) targeted at households experiencing doubled-up homelessness (households staying with family or friends but not on a lease, or self-paying in a hotel) with one-time federal ARPA funds. In addition to helping more than 60 families exit homelessness, the pilot led to the development of a unique vulnerability assessment tool for the households and a technology referral system that could be used for future programs.
- **(2023-2025, PEI)** Expanded housing support and behavioral health services in the Early Childhood Zones through a partnership with the Roots and Wings Foundation.
- **(2024)** Created and communicated space planning policies and procedures to guide major moves, lease changes, facility remodels, employee onboarding/offboarding, and community engagement opportunities. This work was accomplished through listening sessions throughout the Department, led by a cross-departmental workgroup.
- **(2024–2025, BPHCC)** Received no deficiencies in BPHCC's 2024 state oversight survey and only one citation in its 2025 review.
- **(2024, DAS)** Planned for and consolidated unused ADRC space to co-locate all Aging Services; consolidation concluded in January 2025.
- **(2025–2026, DAS & BPHCC)** Conducted research and developed a work plan to position BPHCC as the proposed site for a new Dane County Dementia Stabilization Unit.

- **(2025, EAWS)** Expanded outreach with Covering Wisconsin to better engage residents experiencing homelessness and increase access to basic income support programs.
- **(2025, EAWS)** Implemented the Super-Pod Queue, an internal mechanism to identify and route callers to Economic Support staff who can provide additional assistance and referrals beyond typical income maintenance support.
- **(2025, HAA)** Launched Dane County's first-ever Fair Chance Housing Initiative (2024 Budget initiative) designed to create affordable housing units with supportive services for households that are formerly justice-involved. The first project opened in the Summer of 2025 through a partnership with EXPO.
- **(2025, PEI)** Assisted a total of 841 unique families with a range of housing focused services at Joining Forces for Families offices across the county.