



MINNESOTA PRAIRIE COUNTY ALLIANCE

COMMUNITY SERVICES OF DODGE, STEELE & WASECA COUNTIES

Detailed Design Phase **Summary & Status Update** **April 2014**

formerly known as: **Southeast Minnesota Human Services Delivery Authority**

Vision: Quality human services with great results!

Mission: A visionary collection of counties united in delivering human services to all its residents by:

- Offering a full continuum of care with consistent high quality
- Emphasizing prevention and early intervention
- Emphasizing innovative, area-wide use of a network of people and resources
- Partnering with clients and community providers
- Being accountable to citizens for effectiveness in care delivery and efficiency in the costs to serve

Three counties move forward.

In June and July 2013, Dodge, Steele, and Waseca counties each adopted a resolution to enter the second of three phases for implementing a multi-county human services delivery authority (SDA) –the twelve-month *Detailed Design Phase*:

[Each county will engage in the detailed design of a multi-county human services delivery authority with the full intent to subsequently execute an agreement with those counties that agree and sign this similar resolution... to implement the authority –barring any unforeseen and very significant event.

This phase is to be followed by a six-month *Implementation Phase* to begin in the summer of 2014 and culminate with implementation on January 1, 2015.

Steering committee established.

A Steering Committee has been established to guide the development of the counties through the *Detailed Design Phase* of implementation, as follows:

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|---------|---|
| Dodge: | Rodney Peterson, Commissioner
Jim Elmquist, Administrator
Jane Hardwick, Human Services Director
(Alternate: Dave Erickson, Commissioner) |
| Steele: | Nina Huntington, Commissioner –Chair
Tom Shea, Administrator
Charity Floen, Human Services Director
(Alternate: Doug Johnson, Commissioner) |
| Waseca: | Blair Nelson, Commissioner –Vice Chair
Laura Elvebak, Administrator
Jim Peterson, Commissioner
(Alternate: Ann Ruedy, Assistant Human Services Director) |

The Steering Committee adopted a charter and meeting schedule (typically the second Tuesday of each month, from 1:30 to 3 p.m. and the fourth Friday of each month from 9 to 11 a.m.) to rotate among the three office sites.

Work plan and budget adopted.

The Steering Committee adopted a change management plan and work plan of key activities.

After adjusting from a four-county plan to a three-county plan, the Committee adopted a budget of \$3.1 million for the detailed design and implementation phases. The three counties allocated funding totaling \$2.3 million. The Bush Foundation allocated an initial grant of \$300,000. The Steering Committee will continue to seek additional funding from outside sources.

The Steering Committee entered into an agreement with Dodge County to provide fiscal agent services.

The method of apportioning the local share of funding for the new organization is being revised to reflect the three-county model.

Transitional leadership plan adopted.

The Steering Committee adopted a transitional leadership plan that was developed during the *Mobilize Phase* and appointed Jane Hardwick to serve as part-time transition director. The remainder of the transition leadership team will be put in place in accordance with a plan and schedule recommended by the transition director and approved by the Steering Committee. The team may be appointed from existing positions in the three counties or from outside if qualified, suitable candidates are not currently employed in the counties. Expertise in the form of contact center development, systems of care design, , technology project management, performance measurement, etc., is currently being sought.

With the retirement of Waseca County Human Services Director, Marilee Reck, Waseca County contracted for the provision of director-level support by Charity Floen, Steele County Human Services Director, during the *Detailed Design and Implementation* phases.

Project manager, Abbie Willis, will join the leadership team on April 28, 2014.

Governing board structure adopted.

The structure for the future governing board was adopted. (It is built on the model adopted in the earlier *Mobilize Phase* with clarity added around supermajority voting.)

Board:

- Two delegates from each participating county:
 - Elected officials appointed from and by board of commissioners
 - Each delegate has own vote (does not need to be a county vote)
 - Alternate delegate commissioner appointed by each board of commissioners, required for absence of delegate
 - Items requiring a supermajority:
 - Budget adoption
 - SDA agreement amendments would require approval from supermajority of participating county boards
 - New member counties
 - Election of chair and vice chair of board
- Majority is >50%. Supermajority is >75%, if there are three participating counties.

Board officers:

- Chair: Two-year term; elected in odd-number years
- Vice-chair: Two-year term; elected in odd-number years; serves as chair of finance committee

Board committees:

- Finance: Vice chair of the board would chair the finance committee
 - Staff liaisons: SDA administrator and finance director
 - County members: One representative from each participating county (either administrator or chief financial officer)

A draft joint powers agreement is under review by the Steering Committee, legal consultant, and commissioners. Following adoption of the agreement, a set of by-laws for the governing board will be drafted.

Planning for implementation with the State occurring.

Planning for implementation with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) began in the form of a meeting with the DHS Commissioner on August 19, 2013. Meetings with staff from DHS' major computer systems have begun as detailed planning gets underway. Gary Weiers, from David Drown Associates, is coordinating this process for the project.

On April 15, 2014, the Steering Committee authorized submission of a request to DHS to begin the process of service delivery authority certification under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 402A.

Electronic document management system (EDMS) expansion continues.

Dodge, Steele, Waseca and Mower counties kicked off the beginning steps for expansion of our EDMS, CaseWorks, to child support. They are planning for the system to go live in late July 2014.

We are also reviewing a preliminary proposal to document accounting business processes as necessary for an EDMS to support accounting activities that are handled with internal paper flow. A later stage will include an expansion to social services.

Trauma-informed child welfare supercommunity development kicked off.

Dodge and Waseca counties are participating, along with Winona and Olmsted counties, in a federally funded assessment of their child welfare systems to ascertain the degree to which an understanding of trauma impacts decisions, processes, etc. The Chadwick Center for Children and Families from San Diego, CA, conducted focus groups and tours, and is applying a readiness tool with respect to child protection and welfare, juvenile delinquency, judicial, and mental health. The assessment has been completed and the trauma-informed implementation plan is under development. This will include on-going training and technical assistance over a period of three years. Learning from this project is expected to be available to other counties in the region and will be considered as we form the SDA.

Communication planning underway.

The Steering Committee adopted a communications plan that includes an array of methods, audiences, and deliverables. Audiences include people who use human services, employees and their representatives, commissioners, steering committee, other county departments, other public and private partners, and the general public.

An internal contest for naming the new multi-county human services agency did not generate a new name, so the Steering Committee contracted with Minneapolis advertising agency, Pocket Hercules, to assist with the development of a name and brand for the new organization. In early March, the Steering Committee adopted the following name and logo, as recommended by a staff committee:



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For short, the new organization is being referenced as MN Prairie or Minnesota Prairie. A name and logo style guide is under development.

The Steering Committee authorized the purchase and installation of SharePoint to support the document storage and internal communication requirements of the project and the new agency upon implementation. The organization of the site is under development and is intended to include information for the Steering Committee, leadership teams, project management team, supervisors, and staff in each program area. It will include a calendar, policies and business processes, forms, decisions, work plans, a discussion board, and historical documentation of the project.

In late March, the transition director began meeting with each county commissioner to review the joint powers agreement.

Organizational model revision under way.

Regular meetings among supervisors of the three human services agencies began in September 2013, initially focusing on aspects of change management that will require extensive attention during the *Detailed Design Phase*, and more recently turning to a review of the assumptions that will inform revisions to the 3-county organization model.

Initial meetings of program teams across the three agencies took place in October and November. Staff identified their hopes and worries for a new organization:

- Hopes:
 - Efficiencies, such as reduced duplication
 - Better results for clients
 - Clients able to access services at most convenient location
 - Ability to become more expert with some specialization of responsibilities
 - More back-up to cover when an employee is out sick or on leave or there is a vacancy
 - Balance caseload
 - Better, more timely customer service
 - Build on current, best practices
 - Better training
 - Telecommuting
 - Merged and better technology

- Worries:
 - Concern for what their job will be, where it will be, what pay and benefits will be

- Not able to do a variety of tasks, but having to specialize
 - Lose connections with current clients
 - Clients get lost in the shuffle of a larger organization
 - Less efficiency with travel in larger geographic area
 - Loss of sense of team with smaller agencies; change in culture
 - Harder to make decisions in larger agency; e.g., more red tape
 - Rely too much on technology, rather than direct interactions with colleagues or clients
 - Impact on relationships with other business partners
 - Confusion about roles
- Mitigation ideas:
 - Involve staff in planning
 - Provide information in transparent and timely way
 - Clear policies and processes

Baseline performance data being gathered.

Between 88 and 90 percent of employees in each site participated in an employee engagement survey deployed by Leading Edge Coaching and Development. Results should be forthcoming by mid-April. This data is being gathered both to inform where and how to improve employee engagement and to form a baseline for later comparison after the merged agency has been implemented for a period of time.

The Steering Committee authorized engagement with ISG from Bloomington, MN to design and execute a customer satisfaction survey by phone. The survey is intended to inform the Steering Committee of the status of the customer service in each site (for post-implementation comparison), along with information about preferred access channels for clients (e.g., phone, walk-in, on-line, etc.)

Bush Foundation begins human services redesign project evaluation.

The Bush Foundation has engaged Diane Morehouse from QED to conduct a learning and evaluation study of the 12-county southeastern Minnesota human services redesign project, from its initiation to the current state. The study is expected to enable a broad array of interested parties to learn from the project.

For information about the evaluation, please contact Allison Barmann (651.379.2203) or Greg Keane (651.379.2221) at the Bush Foundation.

Additional information available.

As additional information becomes available, it will be posted to:

<http://www.co.dodge.mn.us/humanservices.html>

Please contact Steering Committee leadership, transition director or any other committee member for any further information:

Steering Committee leadership:

Chair, Commissioner Nina Huntington at nina.huntington@co.steele.mn.us

Vice Chair, Commissioner Blair Nelson at blair.nelson@co.waseca.mn.us

Transition Director:

Jane Hardwick at 507.635.6176 or jane.hardwick@co.dodge.mn.us