



Department of
Community &
Human Services

Strategic Plan:
Fiscal Year 2013
through
Fiscal Year 2015

Introductory Letter

I am pleased to present the City of Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) Strategic Plan for fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2015. DCHS is the City's newest department and came about through the merging of the Departments of Human Services and Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Intellectual Disabilities with the Office on Women. Though the initial implementation of DCHS occurred on July 1, 2010, we invested the first year in developing a solid infrastructure to lay the foundation of the new department.

With that foundation in place, we are now in a position where we can take a longer range view of where the Department needs to move in the coming years. Like all public sector agencies, we live in an environment of constant change – federal and state regulations and funding are more fluid than ever, the national economic downturn has strained existing resources, and the need for accountability continues to increase. In addition, DCHS needed to align its priorities and strategies with the recently completed City of Alexandria Strategic Plan.

The simplest reason for us preparing a departmental strategic plan is to ensure we remain sound financial stewards of public resources by improving existing operations and responding to outside challenges. The DCHS strategic plan is a long term blueprint that compels the almost 700 employees to think beyond day-to-day tasks and consider how we will advance the mission of DCHS – providing effective and efficient safety net services that measurably improve or maintain the quality of life for Alexandrians.

The strategic plan contained in this document follows the traditional layout of strategic plans, with the identification of high-level goals, objectives that help define the high-level goals, and more detailed initiatives that clarify the specific planned actions. A significant difference from other strategic plans, however, is the DCHS strategic plan assumes no additional funding. We decided to encourage an environment of accountability and action by only including those initiatives that were within our span of authority. To further the usefulness of this document, we are taking proactive steps to guarantee this strategic plan becomes a living document: each initiative is assigned to a lead Center and individual who will provide periodic status updates on the status of the initiative implementation.

Though we provided opportunities for input from all DCHS staff, we understand our collaboration with community partners is important to our success. Our vision was to use this first strategic plan as a starting point for future conversations with our stakeholders. We will continue to revise the strategic plan and are committed to expanding involvement in the plan's development.

Mike Gilmore

Director, City of Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services



Summary of DCHS Structure:

In FY 2011, the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse (DMHM RSA), the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Office on Women (OOW) merged into one agency: the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS). The goal of the reorganization was to bring together the City's social safety net programs under one organization to facilitate better coordination of services, improve access to services, and enhance the experiences and outcomes of persons served. As a result of the consolidation the DCHS is now the City's largest single department with a total All Funds budget of \$89.4 million and 579.8 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in FY 2013.

In order to manage a department of this size and ensure DCHS meets its goals of improving the City's social safety net programs, the department has been organized into the following three centers: 1) Adult Services (CAS); 2) Children & Families (CCF); and 3) Economic Support (CES); along with Administrative Services (Admin) and the Office of Strategic Initiatives and Communication (OSIC), which manages human resources, planning, women's issues, Alexandria's Fund for Human Services and communication and outreach to the Alexandria community.

The three programmatic centers (Adult Services, Children & Families, and Economic Support) are responsible for providing vital social safety net services to Alexandria's residents. By merging programs from three different departments the City will serve clients who would have previously received services from providers in different departments under one organization. This change will eliminate inefficiencies and decrease any duplication of efforts.

In addition, bringing together human services professionals with expertise in similar areas (e.g., children or adults) will create more opportunities for the City to better align the services it provides to residents. The Center for Adult Services encompasses mental health, substance abuse and intellectual disabilities services for adults, jail services, and emergency and crisis response services from the former DMHM RSA along with aging and adult services from the former DHS. The Center for Children and Family Services encompasses treatment and prevention services from the former DMHM RSA, domestic and sexual violence services from the former OOW and child welfare, Comprehensive Services Act (CSA), early childhood development, and youth services from the former DHS. The Center for Economic Support merged JobLink, community services, and public assistance programs from the former DHS.

The DCHS has a central administrative unit entitled Administrative Services. It is tasked with providing leadership and management support to the three programmatic centers. Examples of department-wide support functions provided by Administrative Services include fiscal oversight of the Department's \$89.4 million budget (which includes \$38.5 million in grant and special revenue), management of numerous facilities, and IT services.



DCHS Strategic Plan Summary

DCHS Vision: The Department of Community and Human Services envisions a community in which residents enjoy a sense of well-being, safety and self-sufficiency.

DCHS Mission: The Department of Community and Human Services provides effective and essential safety net services that measurably improve or maintain the quality of life for Alexandrians.

The DCCHS Strategic Plan (FY 2013 – FY 2015) builds upon the City Strategic Plan and the Department’s Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles. The purpose of the strategic plan is to advance Alexandria toward a community in which residents enjoy a sense of well-being, safety, and self-sufficiency.

By prioritizing the following seven goals, DCCHS will strengthen the City’s safety net services and improve the quality of life for Alexandrians:

Goal #1: Improving the effectiveness of services.

Goal #2: Integrating and aligning services.

Goal #3: Expanding awareness and access to services.

Goal #4: Providing excellent customer service.

Goal #5: Developing the workforce.

Goal #6: Advancing initiatives contained in the Aging Strategic Plan.

Goal #7: Aligning DCCHS, other City, community, and school services and advancing initiatives to support success of children, youth, and families.

The strategic plan is intended to be a department-wide plan for the next three years. Each initiative has been assigned to a lead Center or Office (or in rare cases, co-leads) to establish accountability and ensure progress is made. The lead Center/Office is noted at the end of each initiative:

- Admin: Office of Administrative Services
- CAS: Center for Adult Services
- CES: Center for Economic Support
- CCF: Center for Children and Families
- Exec: DCCHS Department Director/Executive Deputy Department Director
- OSIC: Office of Strategic Initiatives and Communication



Goal #1: Improving the effectiveness of services.

- **Objective #1: Expand use of best practice and evidence based services.**
 - Initiative #1: Improve consumer engagement through the implementation of family engagement and fatherhood initiatives while increasing youth voice (*CCF*).
 - Initiative #2: Improve outcomes for abused children by expanding use of the Center for Alexandria Children's model, which coordinates and supports a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to support abused and neglected children (*CCF*).
 - Initiative #3: Identify, implement and evaluate current and new evidence based and best practice initiatives that are responsive to priority problems in the Center for Adult Services (*CAS*).
 - Initiative #4: Improve outcomes to children and families by strengthening services for children aged birth through three (*CCF*).

- **Objective #2: Expand community-based care for children and adults.**
 - Initiative #1: Strengthen community-based services to meet needs of children at risk of out of home placement (*CCF*).
 - Initiative #2: Provide linkage and monitoring to the most appropriate community based care for individuals with intellectual disabilities who will exit state facilities due to the settlement between the Department of Justice and the Commonwealth of Virginia (*CAS*).
 - Initiative #3: Increase alternatives to incarceration by expanding jail diversion and re-entry services (*CAS*).
 - Initiative #4: Develop substance abuse prevention and treatment services in the Arlandria community (*CAS*).
 - Initiative #5: Utilize the Playgroup Initiative Study to improve and expand playgroup opportunities to the general community through the use of curriculum development and volunteer facilitator development (*CCF*).

- **Objective #3: Promote affordable housing and improve services to homeless Alexandrians.**
 - Initiative #1: Review the eligibility criteria for the Rent Relief Program for low-income seniors and disabled persons to decrease housing costs (*CES*).
 - Initiative #2: Partner and advocate with Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA), Alexandria Housing Development Corporation (AHDC), the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and other housing organizations to advocate for more affordable housing opportunities and funding for housing options (*CES*).
 - Initiative #3: Implement Rapid Re-Housing/Housing First model to shorten the length and incident of homelessness (*CES*).



- **Objective #4: Increase self-sufficiency and promote economic development by strengthening employment services.**
 - Initiative #1: Organize Business Development Team that would be responsible for coordinating job recruitments, organizing outreach efforts to community organizations and implementing marketing strategies for employer recruitment (*CES*).
 - Initiative #2: Expand the West End Wellness Center supported employment program's network in the community to increase the number of individuals served and improve diversity of job placements and job retention rates (*CAS*).
 - Initiative #3: Align Center for Adult Services vocational programs with the State's Employment First initiative to move toward non-center based activities (*CAS*).

- **Objective #5: Achieve external accreditations to demonstrate a commitment to continually enhancing the quality of services.**
 - Initiative #1: Complete a Comprehensive Services Act self-assessment (*CCF*).
 - Initiative #2: Achieve Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault accreditation by calendar year 2013 (*CCF*).
 - Initiative #3: Support an increase in the number of and the maintenance of Star rated early childhood programs (*CCF*).
 - Initiative #4: Evaluate feasibility of pursuing Community Services Board (CSB) - wide CARF accreditation to ensure competitiveness in health care marketplace (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #5: Complete a Quality System Review (QSR) that assesses the quality of child welfare practice to improve outcomes for children and families in Virginia (*CCF*).
 - Initiative #6: Ensure that all employment staff members in the Center for Economic Support obtain state certification of Workforce Development Practices to ensure equity of services (*CES*).

- **Objective #6: Forecast community service needs and set priorities.**
 - Initiative #1: Analyze City demographics, waitlists, service utilization and unmet community needs to align Department services with priority needs (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #2: Evaluate current waitlists and longer term goals identified in the City Strategic Plan and identify potential funding sources for addressing needs, including researching potential grant opportunities (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #3: Refine performance measures and implement a regular reporting mechanism to share service information in a timely manner (*Admin*).



Goal #2: Integrating and aligning services.

- **Objective #1: Unify and streamline direct service programs.**
 - Initiative #1: Improve coordination of Child Welfare and Behavioral Health service/treatment plans for Child Welfare families serviced by the Center for Adult Services and the Center for Children and Families (*CCF/CAS*).
 - Initiative #2: Enhance services for youth aged 18-22 who are transitioning from youth to adult services (*CCF/CAS*).
 - Initiative #3: Migrate Facilities Maintenance Unit to CityWorks, an on-line tool, to strengthen the physical infrastructure on which all DCHS services depend (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #4: Reduce the time line for hiring new staff (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #5: Evaluate cost effectiveness of contracting targeted services (*Admin*).

- **Objective #2: Fully integrate the Fiscal Division to fully support DCHS staff.**
 - Initiative #1: Finalize development of consistent Department financial policies to improve efficiency and accuracy of financial transactions (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #2: Implement the City's new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system that integrates and automates financial, procurement, and human resource systems to meet the Department's various reporting requirements (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #3: Increase CSB fee for service revenues by actively pursuing new pay sources resulting from health reform (e.g., private insurance) while maximizing program efficiencies (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #4: Increase program manager involvement in development of the non-personnel budget (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #5: Strengthen the fiscal and program monitoring process for non-profit agencies and other organizations providing services for DCHS clients and other residents (*Admin*).

- **Objective #3: Develop appropriate responses to externally driven integration mandates.**
 - Initiative #1: Implement an electronic health record system utilizing existing system or transition to a different system if necessary (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #2: Expand integration of behavioral health and primary care (*CAS*).
 - Initiative #3: Ensure clinical and financial procedures conform to Virginia's change to a Medicaid managed care environment for behavioral health services (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #4: Accommodate the increase in clients due to health care reform (e.g., exchanges and Medicaid expansion (*CES*)).
 - Initiative #5: Plan and prepare for the integration of intellectual disability and developmental disability waiver systems (*Adult*).



Goal #3: Expanding awareness and access to services.

- **Objective #1: Expand internal awareness of DCHS services to DCHS staff members.**
 - Initiative #1: Enhance existing communication tools and develop new means of communication to further educate DCHS staff to increase referrals between different programs (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #2: Strengthen the involvement of clients, boards and commissions in coordination, planning and communication of DCHS activities as appropriate (*Exec*).
- **Objective #2: Expand outreach efforts to all Alexandrians to improve awareness of services.**
 - Initiative #1: Implement a comprehensive DCHS communication plan (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #2: Implement a comprehensive DCHS electronic resource guide for use by staff and public (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #3: Expand Mental Health First Aid training to community members to help the public identify, understand, and respond appropriately to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders (*CAS*).
 - Initiative #4: Implement bystander intervention training to provide education to community members to help prevent sexual violence (*CCF*).
- **Objective #3: Improve access to existing DCHS services.**
 - Initiative #1: Raise awareness of DCHS Accessibility Plan and implement quarterly review to improve coordination of Accessibility Plan components (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #2: Reduce or prevent stigma by providing presentations, events and materials that assist in removal of attitudinal barriers for the public, stakeholders, and public (*Exec*).
 - Initiative #3: Analyze existing service locations to develop long-term plan for locating services (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #4: Expand access to benefit programs to all DCHS service locations and community sites through CommonHelp, which is a State website allowing residents to apply for benefits through the internet (*CES*).
 - Initiative #5: Implement a central intake for youth with behavioral health needs (*CCF*).
 - Initiative #6: Expand Darkness to Light training to Health Department, Alexandria City Public Schools, Head Start and the Center for Children and Families to reduce child sexual abuse (*CCF*).
 - Initiative #7: Collaborate with community partners to identify and address needs of individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders who are experiencing homelessness (*CAS*).



Goal #4: Providing excellent customer service.

- **Objective #1: Expand the Call Center to ensure there is “no wrong door” to service entry.**
 - Initiative #1: Expand the Call Center so that it covers all DCHS services (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #2: Identify long-term, funded staffing solutions for the Call Center (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #3: Explore linkage with City’s call center plan to assure efficiency (*OSIC*).

- **Objective #2: Improve the welcoming atmosphere of DCHS service locations.**
 - Initiative #1: Assure that physical conditions at facilities meet acceptable standards of cleanliness and safety and are well-maintained and comfortable (*Admin*).
 - Initiative #2: Ensure that lobby/common areas of all DCHS locations across the City are easily identified as a DCHS location through branding and consistency in appearance(*OSIC*).

- **Objective #3: Ensure departmental policies and procedures encourage a culture of excellent customer service to both internal and external customers.**
 - Initiative #1: Develop standard Department-wide policies in conjunction with City policies, including such factors as call-back response time and greetings (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #2: Provide training on improving customer service to all current DCHS staff members and new hires (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #3: Ensure that employees at all DCHS locations provide “no wrong door service” resulting in clients and visitors feeling welcomed, respected and safe (*OSIC*).



Goal #5: Developing the workforce.

- **Objective #1: Improve the effectiveness of the DCHS workforce.**
 - Initiative #1: Conduct a staff survey to identify highest priority training/development needs (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #2: Implement a workforce development plan (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #3: Incorporate cultural competence, diversity, and client-centered approach into the DCHS culture and service delivery (internally and externally) (*OSIC*).

- **Objective #2: Further develop managerial and supervisory skills of supervisors.**
 - Initiative #1: Implement a 360 evaluation system (*OSIC*).
 - Initiative #2: Implement a Leadership Development program targeted to meet the managerial and leadership needs of DCHS (*OSIC*).

- **Objective #3: Improve awareness and recognize staff achievement.**
 - Initiative #1: Develop a plan to increase the utilization of the DCHS staff recognition program to improve staff morale (*OSIC*).



Goal #6: Advancing initiatives contained in the Aging Strategic Plan.*

- **Objective #1: Communications and Outreach:** Information about services and programs is readily available and accessible in a variety of formats and venues for older residents of Alexandria, their families and caregivers, local organizations and businesses (CAS).
- **Objective #2: Housing:** A range of affordable, accessible and supportive housing is available that meets the needs of older residents of the City to be able to age at home (CAS).
- **Objective #3: Transportation:** A variety of mobility options, including pedestrian-safe streets, make moving in and around the City and region possible for Alexandrians of all ages and abilities (CAS).
- **Objective #4: Community Services:** Community services accommodate the expectations and needs of aging Alexandrians and support their caregivers (CAS).
- **Objective #5: Economic and Workforce Development:** The important contributions of older Alexandrians to the City's economy are recognized and the innovative entrepreneurship of older residents is encouraged (CAS).
- **Objective #6: Quality of Life:** The quality of life of all Alexandrians is enhanced by the many volunteer activities of its older residents and their continued involvement in the social and civic life of the City (CAS).
- **Objective #7: Health, Wellness, and Safety:** All residents, with special attention to lower-income older City residents, optimize their wellness and receive the health care they require (CAS).

* Note: Detailed initiatives and indicators are found in the Aging Strategic Plan.



Goal #7: Aligning DCHS, other City, community, and school services and advancing initiatives to support success of children, youth, and families.*

- **Objective #1: Develop and implement the youth master plan (0-21 years).**
 - Initiative #1: Develop a profile of youth well-being (CCF).
 - Initiative #2: Engage a wide segment of the community, especially youth and households without youth, in the development of the youth master plan (CCF).
 - Initiative #3: Develop key citywide goals, objectives, initiatives and indicators to advance youth well-being (CCF).
 - Initiative #4: Develop Youth Master Plan implementation plan (CCF).
 - Initiative #5: Align current assets and resources, and leverage additional resources, to achieve targeted results (CCF).

- **Objective #2: Develop a coordinated evaluation system to assess outcomes.**
 - Initiative #1: Determine and prioritize child and youth well-being indicators that the community embraces, commits to, and pledges to take action on (CCF).
 - Initiative #2: Measure the community's and department's progress in addressing key children, youth and family initiatives (CCF).
 - Initiative #3: Commit to evidence-based decisions and invest in joint systems of evaluation and accountability (CCF).

** Note: Goal #7 will be further detailed in future updates based on the outcomes of the youth master plan.*

