



ONEIDA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Professional Services ~ Positive Outcomes

March 28, 2024

Dear Human Service Center Staff,

As you are aware, the County Board of Supervisors for Forest, Oneida, and Vilas Counties have voted to establish Human Services Departments in each of the counties. This will result in the Departments of Social Services and The Human Service Center being dissolved and Human Services Departments being created in each county beginning January 01, 2025. This decision was based on the recommendations found in the Forest, Oneida, and Vilas Counties Feasibility Study – Governance and Management Structures for Human and Social Services dated March 2024.

The implementation of this new structure will be complex and the transition will happen over time. To avoid disruption to client services, the recommendation is to integrate the Oneida County Department of Social Services and The Human Service Center into a Oneida County Department of Human Services. The three counties will then work together through contract or an intergovernmental agreement to provide services through a regional model as agreed to by the three counties. Clients will continue to receive services from their current locations as the feasibility of co-location in Oneida and work sites in Vilas and Forest Counties are determined.

While we do not have all of the answers to questions at this time, we are committed to transparency with staff during this transition. To that end, we are offering you the following information as to the status of the transition:

- A meeting was held with our consultant, Patrick Cork, the Oneida County Human Resources Director, the Oneida County Social Services Director and Assistant Director and the Transition Oversight Committee chair to determine what information is needed to begin the work of transitioning to this new structure. The goal is to move as quickly as possible toward the integration of employees into Oneida County's pay and benefit structure so that we can begin to make offers of employment to HSC employees as soon as possible. The needed information has been requested from HSC.
- A work group is being created to address employee salary and benefits. The workgroup will include staff from Oneida County and the Human Service Center as determined by the Transition Oversight panel.
- Regular reports will be available through the County Transition Oversight panel, and at the monthly Human Service Center full Board meeting.
- We will schedule regular informational meetings for staff to discuss progress and provide updates on the transition process. In addition to regular meetings, we will be providing regular e-mail updates. If there is another method of communication you feel would be beneficial, please let us know.

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- Information meetings will be scheduled with specific employee groups to discuss specific program areas and services. The meeting will be used to address concerns and discuss opportunities within program areas.

We understand that transitioning to a Department of Human Services within a county structure will represent a decision point for Human Service Center staff. While change can be difficult, we hope that you will also see this as an opportunity for all of us to improve services to our residents. We are truly excited by this opportunity to create Human Services Departments within the counties and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Mary Rideout, Director
Oneida County Department of Social Services

Kate Gardner, Director
Vilas County Department of Social Services

Tracy Ferraro, Director
Forest County Department of Social Services

cc: Tamara Feest, Executive Director
The Human Service Center