



Dakota County

Community Services Committee of the Whole Agenda

Tuesday, July 14, 2026

1:00 PM

**Conference Room 3A, Administration
Center, Hastings**

If you wish to speak to an agenda item or an item not on the agenda, please notify the Clerk to the Board via email at CountyAdmin@co.dakota.mn.us
Commissioners may participate in the meeting by interactive technology.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Note: Any action taken by this Committee of the Whole constitutes a recommendation to the County Board.

2. Audience

Anyone in the audience wishing to address the Committee on an item not on the Agenda or an item on the Consent Agenda may send comments to CountyAdmin@co.dakota.mn.us and instructions will be given to participate during the meeting. Verbal comments are limited to five minutes.

3. Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

3.1 Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

4. Consent Agenda

4.1 Approval of Minutes of Meeting Held on May 12, 2026

5. Regular Agenda

5.1 *Social Services-Children and Family Services* - Update On Minnesota African American Family Preservation And Child Welfare Disproportionality Act

6. Assistant County Managers' Report

7. Future Agenda Items

8. Adjournment

8.1 Adjournment

For more information please call 651-554-5742.

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<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/BoardMeetings/Pages/default.aspx>

Public Comment can be sent to CountyAdmin@co.dakota.mn.us



Community Services Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5706

Agenda #: 3.1

Meeting Date: 7/14/2026

Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)



Community Services Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5707

Agenda #: 4.1

Meeting Date: 7/14/2026

Approval of Minutes of Meeting Held on May 12, 2026



Dakota County

Community Services Committee of the Whole

Minutes

Tuesday, May 12, 2026

1:00 PM

**Conference Room 3A, Administration
Center, Hastings**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Slavik, Commissioner Atkins, Commissioner Halverson, Commissioner Droste, Commissioner Workman and Commissioner Holberg

Absent: Commissioner Hamann-Roland

Also in attendance were Heidi Welsch, County Manager; Lucie O'Neill, Assistant County Attorney; Gil Acevedo, Assistant County Manager, Community Services; Marti Fischbach, Assistant County Manager, Community Services; and Colleen Collette, Administrative Coordinator.

2. Audience

Chair, Commissioner Mike Slavik, asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished to address the Community Services Committee on an item not on the agenda or an item on the consent agenda. No one came forward and no comments were submitted to CountyAdmin@co.dakota.mn.us.

3. Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

3.1 Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

Motion: Joe Atkins

Second: Laurie Halverson

On a motion by Commissioner Atkins, seconded by Commissioner Halverson, the agenda was unanimously approved. The motion carried unanimously.

Ayes: 6

4. Consent Agenda

Motion: Liz Workman

Second: William Droste

On a motion by Commissioner Workman, seconded by Commissioner Droste, the consent agenda was unanimously approved as follows:

4.1 Approval of Minutes of Meeting Held on April 14, 2026

5. Regular Agenda

5.1 Receive Reports From Dakota County's Local Advisory Councils For Mental Health

Suzanne Tuttle, Deputy Director, Social Services - Children and Family Services along with Chris Thole, Children's Local Advisory Council Chair and Bella

Carls-Rehovsky, Local Advisory Council Youth Member, presented on this item and stood for questions. This item was on the agenda for informational purposes only; no staff direction was given.

Information only; no action requested.

5.2 Update On Mental Health Promotion And Proclamation Of May As Mental Health Month

Motion: Laurie Halverson

Second: Joe Atkins

Alex Groten, Public Health Supervisor, and Natalie Vasilj, Public Health Program Coordinator, presented on this item and stood for questions.

WHEREAS, May is National Mental Health Month; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the Center for Disease Control:

- One in five United States (U.S.) adults experience mental illness
- One in twenty U.S. adults experience serious mental illness
- 50 percent of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75 percent by age 24
- In 2025, 1 in 5 employees in the U.S. reported experiencing burnout, with mental health problems being one of the key contributors
- 1 in 5 children aged 3-17 in the U.S. have a mental health condition, with ADHD, anxiety, and depression being the most common diagnoses

; and

WHEREAS, mental health is an important determinant of overall health and well-being for individuals; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic, along with compounding community trauma, continues to have a significant impact on adult and child mental health, particularly for people with pre-existing mental illness and Substance Use Disorder (SUD), and for communities of color; and

WHEREAS, many residents are struggling with the long-term impacts of illness, loss of loved ones, social isolation, job loss, changes in routines, racism or other forms of discrimination, and community trauma, resulting in many who are experiencing unprecedented levels of fear, anxiety, and stress; and

WHEREAS, Dakota County has maintained a focus on connecting people to community mental health and SUD services, promoting mental health messaging and initiatives, addressing service needs and gaps through community partnerships, training, and engaging the perspective and voice of people with lived experience; and

WHEREAS, this includes providing community members with practical tools they can use to improve their mental health and increase resiliency; and

WHEREAS, prevention is an effective strategy to reduce the impact of mental health conditions and, with effective treatment, those individuals with mental health conditions can recover and lead full, productive lives; and

WHEREAS, Dakota County has a network of mental health services and initiatives that provide mental health support and promote mental health awareness and education; and

WHEREAS, Dakota County staff, in partnership with other organizations, are committed to building public awareness and addressing stigma as important steps in supporting people to access treatment and support; and

WHEREAS, promoting mental health and awareness of resources and support is especially important given the impacts of the pandemic and community trauma on mental health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, staff recommends that the Dakota County Board of Commissioners proclaim May as Mental Health Month in Dakota County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Dakota County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaims May 2026 as Mental Health Month in Dakota County and supports efforts to promote mental health awareness, training, education, and access to information, services, and supports to serve the mental health needs of the citizens of Dakota County.

This item was approved and recommended for action by the Board of Commissioners on 5/19/2026.

Ayes: 6

6. Assistant County Managers' Report

Marti Fischbach, Assistant County Manager, Community Services, referred the Committee to the written report that was provided. She made note of three items: the article on Modernization, the article that Employment & Economic Assistance will undergo compliance monitoring, and the Public Health Annual Report.

7. Future Agenda Items

Chair, Commissioner Mike Slavik, asked the Committee if anyone had a topic they would like to hear more about at an upcoming Community Services Committee of the Whole meeting. No topics were brought forth.

8. Adjournment

8.1 Adjournment

Motion: Liz Workman

Second: William Droste

On a motion by Commissioner Liz Workman, seconded by Commissioner William Droste, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Ayes: 6

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Collette, Administrative Coordinator
Community Services Division

DRAFT



Community Services Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5642

Agenda #: 5.1

Meeting Date: 7/14/2026

DEPARTMENT: Social Services-Children & Family Services

FILE TYPE: Regular Information

TITLE

**Update On Minnesota African American Family Preservation And Child Welfare
Disproportionality Act**

RESOLUTION

Information only; no action requested.

BACKGROUND

On July 1, 2024, legislation established the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (Act) in MN Stat., Chapter 117 within Minn. Stat. § 260.61 to 260.693. The development of the Act is aimed to address the disproportionate representation of African American families and other overrepresented populations in the child welfare system. The Act focuses on preventing unnecessary removal of children from their families and ensuring families receive the necessary support to stay together and thrive. Implementation of the Act began in Hennepin and Ramsey counties January 1, 2025, with a plan to phase in all counties statewide January 1, 2027.

The Act is comprised of the following key provisions:

- Responsible social service agencies are required to make “active efforts” to prevent the removal of children from their families and to facilitate reunification. Safety plans are to be implemented with specific parameters to allow children to remain in their home. Active effort would also include culturally specific supports and services as well as involving the family planning and service selection.
- Social service agencies will have limitations on the use of emergency removals, foster care placements and termination of parental rights to better ensure children are not unnecessarily removed from their homes.
- Cultural competency training is mandated for case workers, supervisors, judges, guardians ad litem, and attorneys working in the child welfare system.
- Counties will be required to conduct regular case reviews, develop remediation plans when necessary, and report data on their compliance with the Act.

The purpose of the Act is to protect the best interests of African American and disproportionately represented children in the child welfare system. The intent of the Act is to develop a continuum of culturally responsive community-based programs aimed at supporting African American and disproportionately represented families without the use of placement. African American families and children are overrepresented in the child welfare system to include out-of-home placement, and

therefore, efforts are required to promote the stability and security of this population and other overrepresented families to reduce this disparity.

As staff prepares for implementation of the Act in 2027, resource considerations include financial implications including increased staffing, technology improvements, need for community service providers, training for staff and system partners, and concrete supports for families. It will be important to develop strategies that fund and resource the entire child well-being community to meet the goal of the reducing racial and other disproportionalities in our systems.

2026 Legislative updates:

- Case review process has been delayed until July 1, 2027. Decision has not been made on whether the State or Counties will be responsible for conducting reviews.
- The State approved \$15 million one-time allocation to counties for implementation statewide.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only; no action requested.

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPACTS

None.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

None.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

CONTACT

Department Head: Nikki Conway

Author: Lawrence Dickens



Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act – Update July 2026

Nikki Conway, Children and Family Services Director

Lawrence Dickens, Children and Family Services Deputy Director

- The Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA) was established on July 1, 2024.
- Minimal changes in 2026 legislative session with implementation statewide still set for January 1, 2027.
- Goal: Protect the best interests of African American and other children and families disproportionately represented in the child welfare system.

Child Wellbeing Continuum

Goal: Serve more children and families earlier in the continuum.



Prevention



**Early
Intervention**



**Child
Welfare
Response**



**Child
Protection
Response**

Training
Data

Compliance and Accountability

Legislative updates:

- Case reviews postponed until July 2027
- \$15 million one-time appropriation to support implementation statewide
- Statewide Working Group report due to the legislature September 1, 2026

Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)
guidance on 2027 & 2028 eligibility:

- Only racial and ethnic disproportionalities initially
- Data collection on income and disability status disproportionalities
- County Attorney's Office (CAO) is reviewing for legality

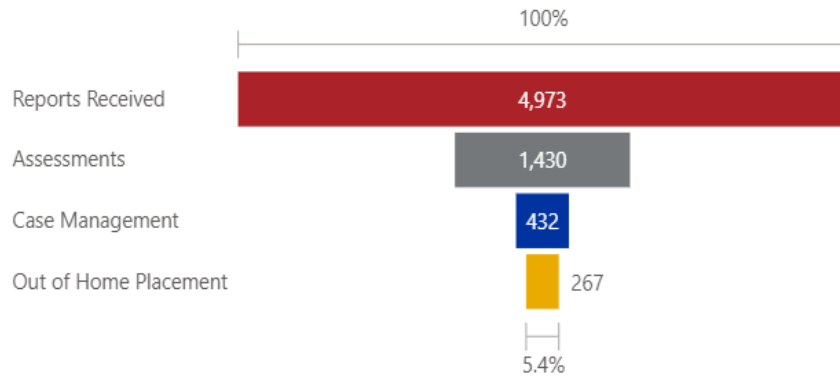
Cultural responsiveness training:

- Launched June 2026
- Required for all child protection staff by January 1

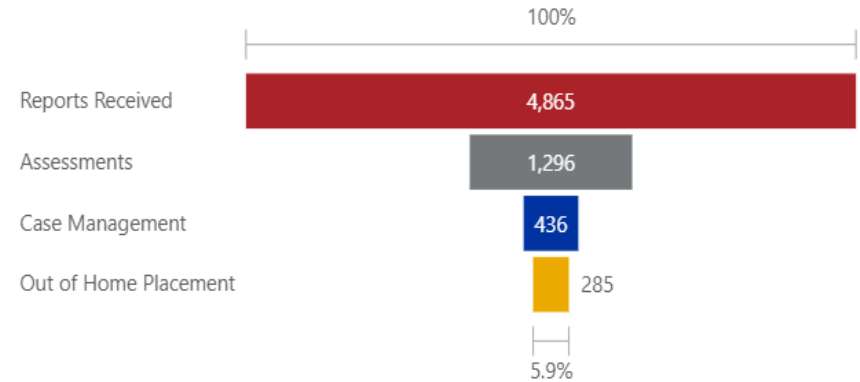
Dakota County Case Counts



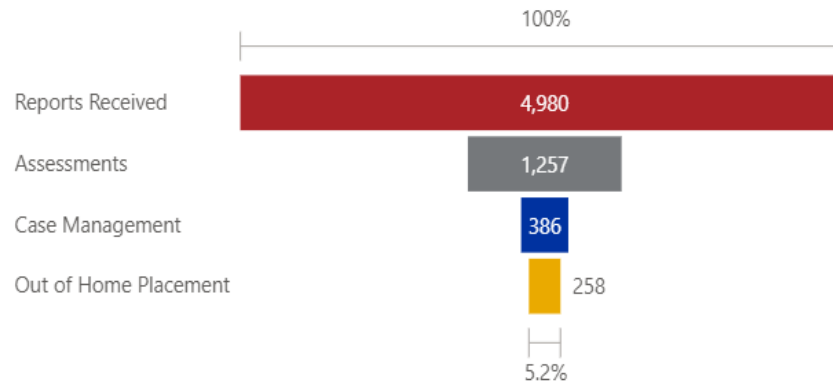
2023



2024



2025



Racial Disproportionality



● African American / Black ● American Indian / Alaska Native ● Asian / Pacific Islander ● Two or more races ● White



Percentages exclude children with unknown racial identity.

MAAFPCWDA Implementation Progress

Implementation Progress - Prevention

Goal: Serve more children and families earlier in the continuum.



Prevention

Community Resource
Centers (CRCs)
Concrete Supports
Workgroup



Early Intervention

Parent Support
Outreach Program
(PSOP)
Pathways to Prosperity
(P2P)



Child Welfare Response

Educational neglect
response path
Juvenile Screening
Team (JST)



Child Protection Response

Active efforts
Safety planning and
practice framework
Kinship engagement
Collaboration with
County Attorney's
Office

Children and Family Services Data Workgroup

Implementation Progress – Early Intervention

Goal: Serve more children and families earlier in the continuum.



Prevention

Community Resource Centers (CRCs)
Concrete Supports Workgroup



Early Intervention

Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP)
Pathways to Prosperity (P2P)



Child Welfare Response

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Juvenile Screening Team (JST)



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Implementation Progress – Child Welfare Response



Goal: Serve more children and families earlier in the continuum.



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Early Intervention

Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP)
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Child Protection Response

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Collaboration with CAO

Children and Family Services Data Workgroup

Implementation Progress – Child Protection Response



Goal: Serve more children and families earlier in the continuum.



Prevention

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Early Intervention

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Educational neglect response path
Juvenile Screening Team (JST)



Child Protection Response

Active efforts
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Children and Family Services Data Workgroup

Implementation Progress – Children and Family Services Data Workgroup



Goal: Serve more children and families earlier in the continuum.



Prevention

Community Resource
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- Working to appropriately staff and structure the educational neglect response
 - Formerly in Child Protection and moving to Early Intervention, freeing up time for Child Protection workers to do active efforts
 - Based on volume, will require five Social Workers (SWs)
- Kinship engagement
 - Pilot to involve these staff earlier in cases launches this month
 - More active, direct engagement with kin, fathers, and non-custodial parents
- Relative licensing



- Program Coordinators – two positions for:
 - Family Group Decision Making
 - Community engagement
 - Data and compliance
 - Governance structure and oversight
- Child Protection Social Worker – one position:
 - Making whole to keep caseloads manageable in Child Protection and allow time for active efforts

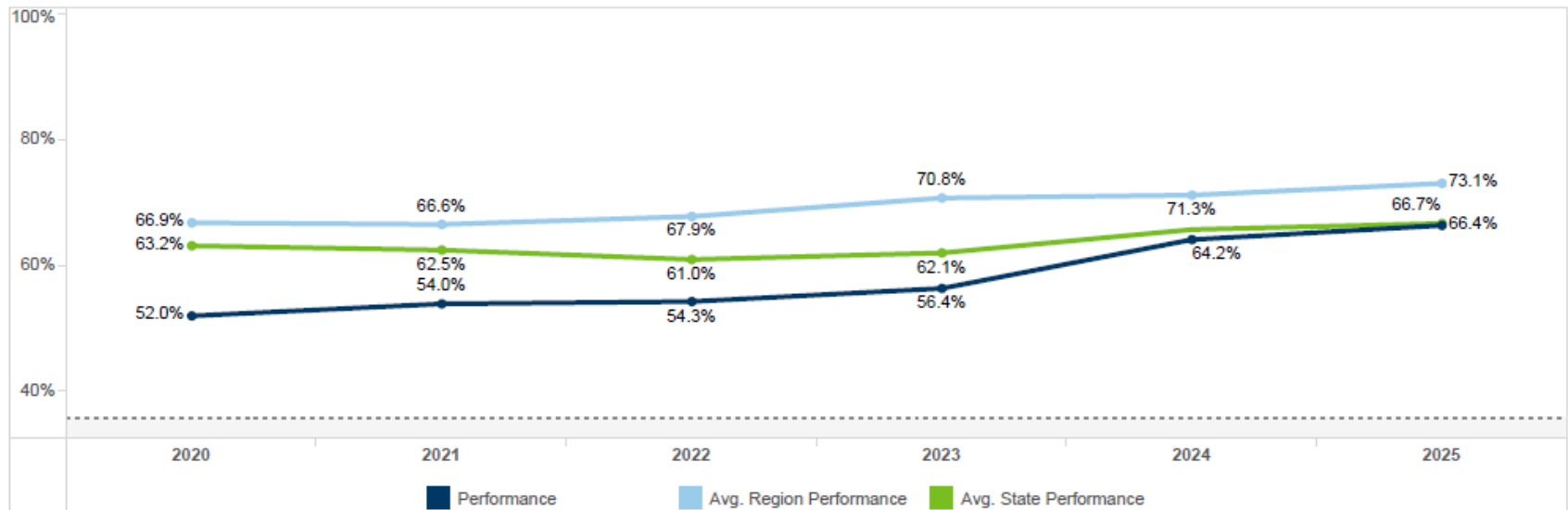


Percent of days children in family foster care spent with a relative.

County Performance by Year

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Performance	54.0%	54.3%	56.4%	64.2%	66.4%
Number of Cases	204	221	227	283	215

County/Region/State Performance Trends



*The dotted line on each graph indicates the historical measure threshold of 35.7%; this threshold is temporarily suspended for the Human Services Performance Management System.

Future Staff Needs

- Business Analyst for data analysis
- Staff for case reviews
- Additional capacity for child welfare work
 - Educational neglect
 - Parent Support Outreach Program
 - Other Child Welfare programs, including change to age of delinquency



- Seek the voices of children and families to inform implementation and service array
- Continue to engage with our Eliminating Racial Disparities (ERD) partners
- Define a consistent structure for engagement across the section



Current Implementation Contracts



Goal: Serve more children and families earlier in the continuum.



Prevention

The Improve
Group



**Early
Intervention**



**Child
Welfare
Response**

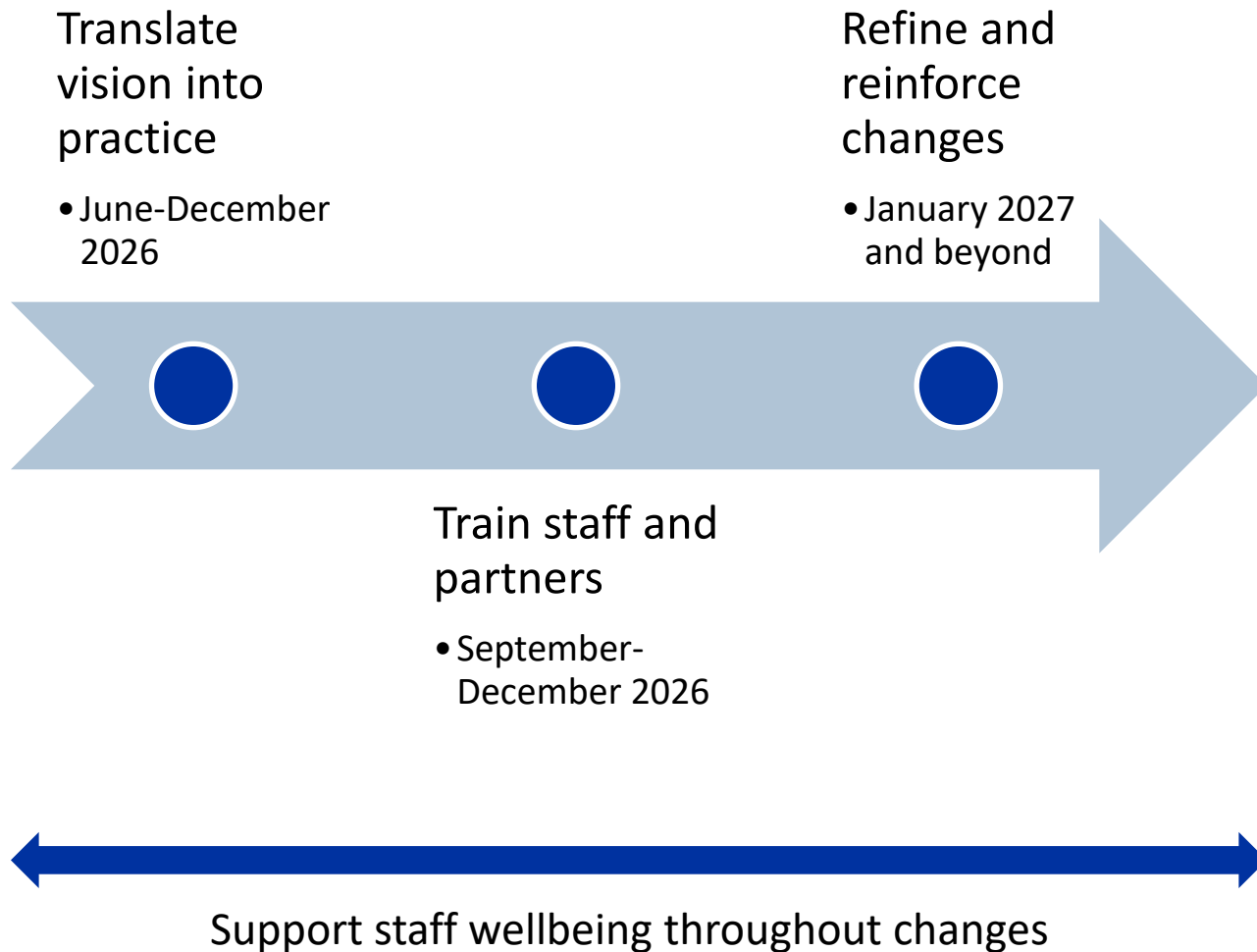


**Child
Protection
Response**

SafeGenerations

A17 Consulting

Next Steps



Potential Future Service Contracts



- Educational neglect diversion
- Father and noncustodial parent engagement
- Youth advisory council
- Family Group Decision Making expansion
- In process: Procurement for in-home and community-based services
 - Opportunity to increase culturally responsive providers and services, aligned with MAAFPCWDA



Look for improvements in:

- Disproportionalities in who Children and Family Services serves
- Serving families earlier in the continuum
- Leveraging contracted services and supports
- Out-of-home placement rates and experiences
- Permanency outcomes
- Ongoing program costs

Questions





Community Services Committee of the Whole

Request for Board Action

Item Number: DC-5708

Agenda #: 8.1

Meeting Date: 7/14/2026

Adjournment