



ECONOMIC SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Strategic Plan 2021-2023

March 2020



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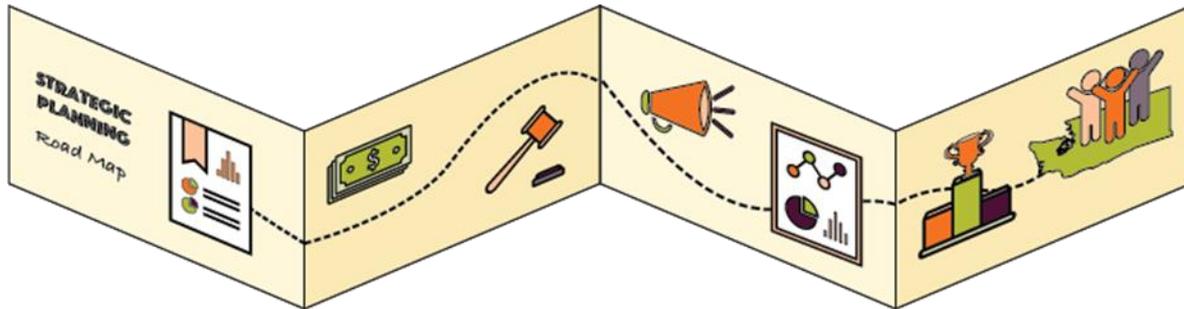
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STRATEGIC PLANNING IN DSHS

DSHS' goal and commitment is to be a national leader in every aspect of client service. The DSHS strategic plans are a roadmap to the future. They identify where we currently are with our performance, where we want to be and how we're going to get there. The plans are used to guide our day-to-day efforts and focus our resources. They are integral to the work we do every day.



To that end, a strategic plan is crucial for making informed budget decisions. The Legislature requires each agency's budget recommendations be directly linked to the agency's strategic plan. Our plan articulates our mission, programs, goals and objectives. The strategic plan itself links budget requests to specific efforts in order to achieve statewide goals.

While the primary purpose of a strategic plan is to guide the agency's activities, it also provides a helpful means to communicate with clients, partners and stakeholders outside the agency. In addition, state law (RCW 43.88.090) directs each state agency to define its mission and to establish measurable goals to achieve desirable results for customers, and to develop clear strategies and time lines for achieving these goals.

Given the historic times we are living in with the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021-2023 biennium will be a dramatically different strategic planning and budget season. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on state revenues and as such, the Department is facing devastating budget reductions that reflect an economic downturn expected to match or exceed that of the Great Recession. DSHS doesn't know yet what our new normal will be. However, we will take this opportunity to think about the fundamental changes to how we serve people and focus on the strategic priorities that support our core mission of transforming lives.

For the 2021-23 Strategic Plan, DSHS has an overarching executive summary that encompasses the many services and administrations within DSHS. Additionally, each administration has a more specific strategic plan, with objectives and action plans related to their vast and diverse programs. Lastly, the plans have metrics that are monitored quarterly to ensure we are meeting our goals and objectives. The DSHS strategic plans are developed on a two-year cycle and are annually updated.

DSHS PRIORITIES AND GOALS

This agency-wide strategic plan addresses the priorities for all of DSHS, and sets measurable objectives and goals. Using data, we monitor our progress in order to ensure DSHS serves our clients in a meaningful way and to the best of our ability within our funding. Every DSHS employee contributes to the mission of Transforming Lives by addressing the priorities and accomplishing the objectives within our agency-wide strategic plan.



DSHS has articulated broad over-arching priorities for the agency based on discussions with clients, stakeholders, the Governor’s Office, legislators, staff and others. These priorities directly address current needs and anticipate future needs. By working together across administrations, stakeholders, vendors, community partners, agencies, and others, DSHS will be able to deliver a range of quality of services to Washington residents, work efficiently and effectively, and be an employer of choice for our staff.

In addition, each strategic objective within the DSHS Strategic Plan supports the five broad goals for DSHS.

PUBLIC TRUST	HEALTH	PROTECTION	QUALITY OF LIFE	SAFETY
Strong management practices will ensure quality and efficiency.	Each individual and each community will be healthy.	Each individual who is vulnerable will be protected.	Each individual in need will be supported to attain the highest possible quality of life.	Each individual and each community will be safe.

These DSHS goals align with the Governor’s goals of:

- Healthy and Safe Communities.
- Efficient, Effective and Accountable Government.

ECONOMIC SERVICES ADMINISTRATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



“I like to think of DSHS clients as being my two million friends who come to dinner every night. Economic Services Administration makes up the vast majority of those friends. This strategic plan shows promising, person-centered goals and I look forward to supporting ESA’s state-of-the-art, federally recognized best practices.”

Cheryl Strange, Secretary
Department of Social and Health Services



“Our unifying goal is to reduce the number of people living in poverty by 50% from 2015 to 2025 in a way that eliminates disparity. ESA’s talented and dedicated staff and partners are committed to reducing poverty and hunger, improving the lives of those who turn to us for help and building healthier families and communities.”

David Stillman, Assistant Secretary
Economic Services Administration

ESA Organizational Chart

Nearly one of every four Washington residents turns to ESA for assistance with cash grants, food, child support, disability determination, and supports for transition to employment and other services. Each day this customer base of two million receives service from about 4,000 dedicated ESA employees who help diverse individuals and families across Washington state meet their foundational needs and work toward achieving their full potential.

Many of our customers live on the margin. Although most are not receiving a cash grant, they may be relying on food assistance, work-related support services, assistance with child support, or medical coverage. A family crisis or change in the economy, even a small one, can force our friends, families, and neighbors into situations requiring even more assistance, whether it’s the full support of a cash grant or temporary assistance to avoid the loss of housing. When unemployment rates rise, or there are downturns in the economy, the demand for services increases, as does the pressure on programs, funding, staffing and other resources.

Every day, strong organizational values help our leadership and staff transform mission and vision statements into reality. Our unifying goal cannot be achieved alone, which is why we also work to build strong partnerships to provide resources that support the social and economic mobility of children, adults, and families. Pursuit of this unified goal shapes our organizational culture and guides decision-making on everything from staffing decisions to setting priorities on allocation of limited resources.

Mission
We transform lives by connecting children, adults, and families to the resources and opportunities that help them reach their full potential

Vision
A Washington without poverty and injustice

Values
Innovation
Collaboration
Respect
Accountability
Service
Integrity
Communication

OBJECTIVES

Below are the specific strategic objectives within the department's priorities. Some objectives refer to decision funding packages. Decision packages are funding requests DSHS submits to the Office of Financial Management as part of the state budget process. DSHS monitors progress in meeting strategic objectives, reports on it quarterly on the DSHS website and updates objectives as needed.

DSHS STRATEGIC PRIORITY: PROVIDE A PATHWAY OUT OF POVERTY AND BECOME HEALTHIER

ESA GOAL 1: HUMAN-CENTERED SERVICE DELIVERY. We use a whole-person/whole-family approach with customers to intentionally engage and reflect the voice of our customers in the design and delivery of services.

Importance: In order to reduce poverty, it is critical to address the interconnected needs of our customers and their families, and to re-design our services based on those needs.

Strategic Objective 1.1: Transform case management by redesigning effective, standardized case management practices and the social service delivery model.

Decision Package: 060 – PL – FK – TALX Wage Verification

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: Providing a pathway out of poverty will require ESA to be a leader in offering innovative service delivery through continuous process improvement that optimizes program outcomes and services. We must redefine social and human services through thoughtful, intentional and strategic engagement with staff, customers and the community, and expand services beyond our programs by connecting customers with meaningful resources.

Success Measure:

- 1.1.1 Increase the percentage of customers who stay off food assistance for at least 12 months after becoming ineligible due to income.
- 1.1.2 Increase tools and enhance databases that allow staff to meaningfully connect customers to external resources.
- 1.1.3 Decrease the percentage of families in WorkFirst sanction.

Action Plan:

- Build internal capacity by simplifying and standardizing case management tools and processes.
- Improve access and remove barriers to resources and services through comprehensive review of policies and procedures with an equity, diversity and inclusion lens.
- Provide meaningful partnership and referrals.
- Develop, train and use a whole-family approach to case management.
- Solicit and use the authentic voice of the population we serve in implementing new service delivery models.
- Create a system of continuous improvement in customer service and outcomes through monitoring and evaluation.



Strategic Objective 1.2: Implement the ESA-involved recommendations in the Poverty Reduction Work Group (PRWG) 10-year action plan.

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: In a bold step to improve the well-being of over 1.8 million Washingtonians struggling to make ends meet and support our kids, families, communities, and economy in reaching their full potential, Governor Inslee issued a directive establishing an interagency workgroup on poverty reduction. The work group is a constellation of state agencies, legislators, state racial and ethnic commissions, tribal and urban Indians, employers, workforce development councils, and community-based and philanthropic organizations.

Success Measure:

1.2.1 Success will be determined by the recommendations and action plans outlined in the PRWG 10-year action plan

Action Plan:

- Action plans to accomplish the recommendations in the 10-year action plan will be developed in coordination with the PRWG, other participating agencies and community partners.

Strategic Objective 1.3: Increase child support collections.

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: Child support represents more than 40% of the income of poor families who receive it. Consistent child support payments and resources for the whole family contribute to a family's economic stability and their ability to exit the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program due to self-sufficiency.

Success Measure:

1.3.1 Increase current support collected from 67.58% in federal fiscal year 2019 to 68.5% by federal fiscal year 2023.

See Chart E1.3: Percent of current child support collected

Action Plan:

- Develop enhanced online platforms for customers to interface with Division of Child Support (DCS), including a streamlined online enrollment form, an online modification form, a portal to submit documents, and an online chat feature.
- Use human-centered design principles to review forms and processes from the perspective of the customer, simplifying when possible and allowing for greater customer engagement and customer input into our work processes and policy development.
- Expand, enhance, and/or develop opportunities and connections that provide customers employment and support services.
- Work with ESA divisions and state agencies to increase communication and access to data to calculate more accurate child support orders and provide a more streamlined experience for the customer.



ESA GOAL 2: HUMAN-CENTERED EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS. We foster a dynamic organizational culture of fully engaged employees and a welcoming, safe, and inclusive work environment.

Importance: ESA strives to be an employer of choice by valuing our employees, intentionally addressing employee feedback, and incorporating employee insights to continually evolve. When employees are their authentic selves at work, engagement soars and we are best aligned to achieve our poverty reduction goal.

Strategic Objective 2.1: Engage employees through recruitment, retention, and promotion improvements.

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: Being an employer of choice requires investment in talent recruitment and thorough onboarding along with policies and practices responsive to employee needs for training, career development, work environment, and work/life balance.

Success Measure:

- 2.1.1 Increase the participation rate in exit surveys from 24% in calendar year 2019 to 50% in calendar year 2022.
- 2.1.2 Decrease the number of employees leaving ESA for lack of skill or career development from 10% in calendar year 2019 to 7% in calendar year 2022.
- 2.1.3 Achieve and maintain a monthly turnover rate lower than the national average for state and local governments.

Action Plan:

- Develop career pathways and professional development opportunities beyond the local office that take the entire employee lifecycle into account, from pre-employment to retirement/exit.
- Evaluate employee exit survey results to establish baseline data and ongoing metrics to inform recruitment and retention strategies.
- Educate and encourage supervisors to ensure employees who leave are offered the exit survey.
- Develop innovative ways to recruit new employees through updated marketing, job descriptions, and recruitment practices to ensure new employees understand and support our mission, vision, and values.



Strategic Objective 2.2: Support and promote a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: ESA seeks to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion by identifying and deploying concrete action plans to reinforce and continuously improve the positive work happening throughout the administration. We do this by engaging employees at all levels and in all parts of the organization in developing, promoting, and creating an organizational culture of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging that is reflected in daily interactions and business practices. This commitment lies at the core of our organizational values.

Success Measure:

- 2.2.1 Increase the number of employees responding “always” or “usually” to the questions that comprise the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Index¹ to increase the ESA EDI Index score.
- 2.2.2 Increase the number of Certified Diversity Professionals (CDPs) from five in 2019 to 45 by July 1 2021.
- 2.2.3 Increase the number of Certified Diversity Executives (CDEs) in designated positions² from five in 2019 to 15 by July 1 2021.

Action Plan:

- Implement ESA EDI initiatives focused on visible support and executive sponsorship, middle manager forums, human resource opportunities, and EDI Community of Practice and planning team structures.
- Continue to offer and provide support for CDP and CDE certification to ESA employees, as appropriate.
- Support increases to job applicant diversity by identifying opportunities for outreach through community connections and mitigating bias in the employee life-cycle and develop pathways of career progression, promotion, and skill-building that increase access to a diverse cohort of employees.
- Use human-centered, N.E.A.R. science³ and EDI informed principles to further develop an organizational culture that promotes a workplace where employees feel supported in being their authentic selves and encouraged to contribute the full diversity in thought, perspective, identity, and lived experience they bring to the organization.

Strategic Objective 2.3: Promote a culture of safety and safe work environments.

Decision Package: 000 – AW – ML – L7 – Personal Protective Equip COVID19

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: Every employee should feel safe and protected when they come to work. Workplace safety is essential to promote wellness and security for everyone, including employees, customers, and stakeholders.

¹ DSHS Research & Data Analysis team developed a comprehensive EDI index that consists of multiple questions from the Employee Survey to measure performance related to EDI values.

² Designated positions in ESA for CDEs include all Division Directors and other key executives as well as divisional leadership. Certified Diversity Professional candidates will include those with direct service roles, supervisory positions, policy analysts, and those with accessibility, language access, and marginalized population focus.

³ N.E.A.R. science is a cluster of fields that study Neuroscience, Epigenetics, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and Resilience that give a holistic picture of a person’s experiences over their lifetime.



Success Measure:

2.3.1 Increase the number of employees responding “always” or “usually” to the statement “I feel physically safe from harm at work” from 81% in 2019 to 84% on the 2021 DSHS Employee Survey.

Action Plan:

- Continue to offer and promote employee training to increase safety, including First Aid, CPR/AED, verbal de-escalation, and active threat training.
 - Regularly communicate with employees about workplace safety, including updates to safety plans, safety in daily work routines, and the most common workplace injuries affecting ESA employees.
 - Continue to update, share, and train the continuity of operations and emergency response plans so all employees are aware of the procedures in the event of an emergency.
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Strategic Objective 2.4: Show our appreciation and support for staff by implementing workplace improvements.

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: Our staff are the backbone of the organization and as such we want to recognize them for the important role they play in poverty reduction. A great way to recognize our staff is to improve the work environment by implementing and improving staff supports that help make ESA a great place to work.

Success Measure:

2.4.1 Increase the number of employees responding “always” or “usually” to the statement “I would recommend my agency as a great place to work” from 61% in 2019 to 64% on the 2021 DSHS Employee Survey.

Action Plan:

- Continue to develop and implement programs that help staff achieve a desirable work-life balance such as the infants at work program, telework, flex-time opportunities, alternate work schedules, wellness programs, and modern work environments.
 - Evaluate ideas from employees collected through the DSHS Staff Idea Tour and other relevant surveys regarding the work environment for feasibility and implement where possible.
 - Review and analyze employee satisfaction survey results and develop action plans based on employee feedback in the survey.
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ESA GOAL 3: TECHNOLOGY. We create and maintain solutions for business problems through modern technology and enhanced infrastructure.

Importance: The systems and underlying framework of ESA support and enhance the ability to provide service to our customers, increase organizational effectiveness, and improve the work environment for our employees.



Strategic Objective 3.1: Modernize technology and architecture, prioritized by business needs, in a constantly changing operating environment.

Decision Package: 060 – PL – FL - Modern Integrated Eligibility

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: Our ability to provide superior customer service relies heavily on technology that is responsive to business needs, user-friendly, secure and available with minimal down time. The current Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) complex and Support Enforcement Management System (SEMS) rely on old programming languages and time-intensive development processes, and each uses multiple system architectures.

Success Measure:

3.1.1 Success measures will be developed based on work prioritization after the mainframe re-hosting is completed in July 2020.

Action Plan:

- Re-host the ACES mainframe to create a more flexible platform to modernize our technological capabilities.
- Provide recommendations and support information technology improvements in coordination with the Health and Human Services (HHS) Coalition.

Strategic Objective 3.2: Deliver IT solutions and services that engage and reflect the voice of our customers in the design and delivery of services for staff, stakeholders and the public.

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: Implementing processes and tools that enable more efficient operations increases the innovation and delivery capability for our organization.

Success Measure:

3.2.1 Refactor⁴ Java applications to HTML 5 level by Dec. 31, 2021.

3.2.2 Implement Infrastructure as Code (IaC)⁵ by Dec. 31, 2021.

3.2.3 IT Service Management is fully implemented by June 30, 2022.

Action Plan:

- Decrease technical debt⁶ by addressing known application vulnerability issues.
- Implement tools that further enable efficient delivery of services and products.
- Develop and implement the IT Service Management components including the service catalog, and the incident, problem, change, and release management systems.

⁴ Refactoring is the process of restructuring existing computer code without changing its external behavior to improve nonfunctional attributes of the software

⁵ Infrastructure as Code is the process of managing and provisioning data centers through machine-readable files, rather than physical hardware configuration

⁶ Technical debt is a concept that reflects the cost of additional work to update existing or outdated systems



ESA GOAL 4: PARTNERSHIPS. We strategically seek out and develop relationships with partners to provide a full complement of services and supports for our shared customers.

Importance: ESA can best accomplish its mission and unifying goal by developing, expanding, and nurturing strategic relationships with key state, federal, tribal, local, and community partners that serve shared customers.

Strategic Objective 4.1: Collaborate with our partners to provide comprehensive services to customers.

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: Some Washingtonians may require more than one support in order to reach their full potential. ESA strives to not only provide excellent service for the programs we administer, but also connect our customers with partners that address needs beyond ESA's programs.

Success Measure:

4.1.1 100% of family members of newly incarcerated persons that are contacted by the Department of Corrections are made aware of DSHS programs and services by December 2021.

Action Plan:

- Collaborate with our partners in the Department of Corrections to serve common customers and their families by incorporating DSHS program information into the initial outreach to family members of newly incarcerated persons.
 - Continue to strengthen relationships with tribal partners by seeking their consultation and participation in policy development and program activities.
 - Grow legislative relationships by providing information and data on the benefits of our requests for all Washingtonians.
 - Improve information technology support for prosecuting attorneys to aid in child support establishment and modification.
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ESA GOAL 5: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE. We demonstrate our commitment to responsible stewardship of our resources for the benefit of all individuals, families, and communities across Washington.

Importance: Increasing organizational efficiency makes the best use of state resources and allows for better outcomes for our customers. By focusing on our effectiveness as an organization, we increase the public trust in our ability to serve our customers and reduce poverty.



Strategic Objective 5.1: Increase the security of customer information.

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: Protecting customer information is extremely important. Our customers trust we will safeguard their personal information. We have federal and state laws and agency policy requirements to ensure the protection of sensitive customer data. This is a challenging task at a time when individual identities and their associated information are marketable commodities. We must continually protect this information through constant vigilance, proactive measures, and anticipation of future threats without limiting the ability to share data in the pursuit of customer service and department goals.

Success Measure:

5.1.1 Implement 100% of prioritized mitigation strategies to decrease the display and/or inappropriate disclosure of Social Security and bank account numbers by December 2021.

Action Plan:

- Engage an interdisciplinary team and stakeholders to identify any remaining risks for the collection and exposure of sensitive customer data.
 - Identify and resolve potential audit findings around security-related issues.
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Strategic Objective 5.2: Maintain high accuracy and timeliness rates for Disability Determination Services.

Does this objective have an I.T. component? Yes No

Importance: Social Security disability benefits are critical to individuals with disabilities to meet their basic needs, and timely processing is essential. Maintaining high accuracy rates for our services ensures appropriate use of financial resources and increases public trust in both state and federal disability programs.

Success Measure:

5.2.1 Exceed the national average processing time for initial disability determinations of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) claims from October 2021 to September 2023.

5.2.2 Achieve 97% decisional accuracy rate on initial disability claims from October 2021 to September 2023.

See Chart E1.7: The average time to process initial disability determinations for Social Security Disability Insurance cases (Title II-SSDI), and for Supplemental Security Income cases (Title XVI-SSI)

See Chart EX.4: Initial claims accuracy rate

Action Plan:

- Continue implementation of the nationwide Social Security Disability Claim Processing System (DCPS) to include all three Disability Determination Services offices across the state, and process at least 90% of all Social Security Disability and state Non-Grant Medical Assistance (NGMA) claims through the new system to improve processing times.
- Maintain partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to identify quality deficiencies and policy clarifications in order to develop employee trainings, new business processes, and effective quality assurance monitoring techniques to increase decisional accuracy rates

