



**IOWA** | Health and  
Human Services

# Strategic Plan

**January 2024 - January 2027**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**04** Message from the  
Director

**06** Executive Summary

**09** HHS Strategic Priorities



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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



To our HHS stakeholders and team members,

The factors that distinguish our work at the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS) may seem simple, yet they are incredibly significant: our dedicated team, our unwavering commitment to the people of Iowa and the passion we bring to the work. I see this commitment firsthand every day.

The challenges we have faced in the past few years, of which there have been many, have been instrumental to informing how we move forward. We must be dynamic, and able to adapt. We must address our system needs through a systems approach. And we must remain diligent and focused on our vision, making sure we are a trusted leader and partner in protecting health and providing high-quality, equitable services to all Iowans.

Central to the development of this plan was incorporating the voice of our team. We have a significant volume of critical efforts underway as we establish Iowa HHS as a brand-new agency and as we work to transform our health and human services system. You'll see this plan focuses on supporting our team and removing barriers so they can do their work to deliver on all of the transformative initiatives in progress. This plan charts out how we bring this all together using a common vision and framework.

Every day we work to improve the lives of individuals, families and communities.

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“ Every day we work to improve the lives of individuals, families and communities. It is now more pivotal than ever that HHS creates pathways of hope for those we serve ”

It is now more pivotal than ever that HHS creates pathways of hope for those we serve. By embracing these principles and implementing our new strategic plan, we will help all Iowans thrive and be ready to meet future challenges.

I am incredibly proud of our team and the work they are doing to truly move our system forward. This plan provides the pathway forward—I'm hopeful you'll join us in this work.

All my best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Garcia". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Kelly Garcia**  
Director

# Executive Summary

## A BOLD NEW FRAMEWORK

As a newly aligned Health and Human Services agency, we must reimagine our Strategic Plan and framework to create space for fresh perspective, ideas and innovative approaches to delivering programs and services in Iowa. We now have a unique opportunity, offering us the chance to explore the work in new ways.

## How This Plan Was Developed

### Early 2023

*HHS executive team collaborated to understand each other's work. Leaders shared observations, successes and challenges from their #TeamHHS teams.*

### Spring 2023

*Leadership within each division completed a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis.*

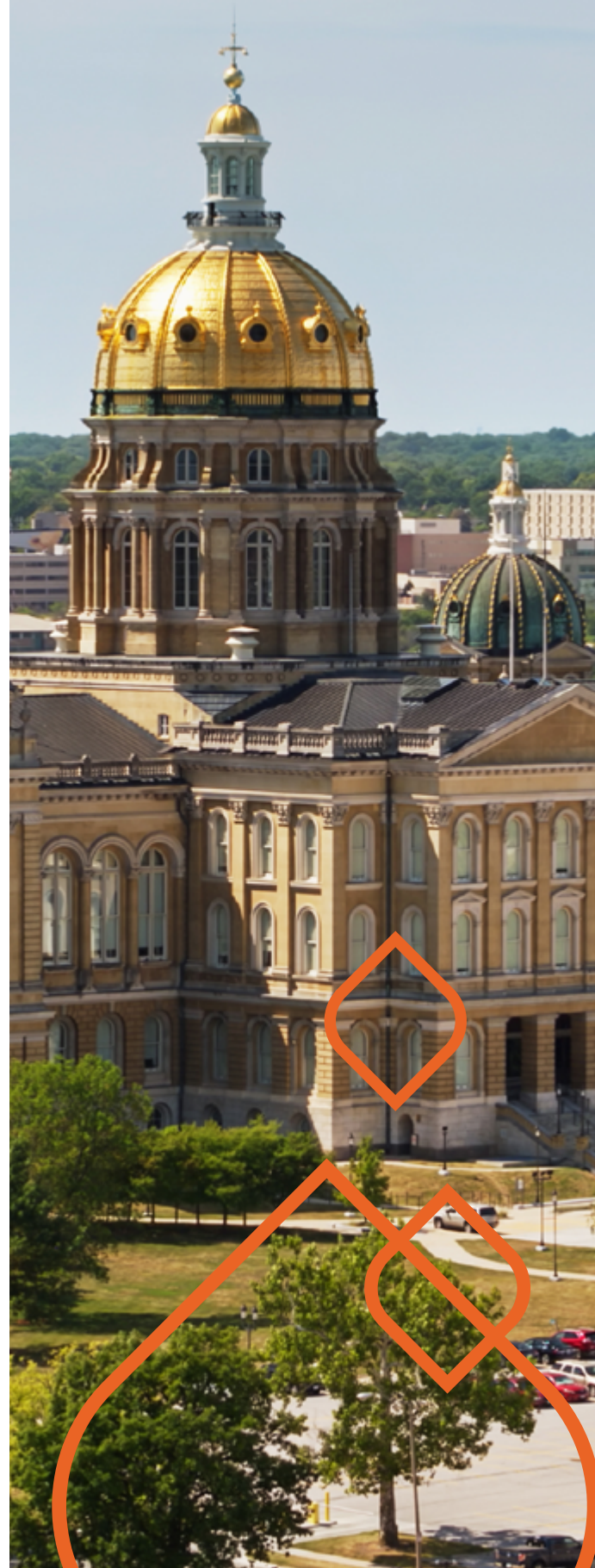
### Spring 2023

*HHS leadership were surveyed across the agency to identify the needs of their teams.*

### Summer 2023

*HHS executive team analyzed the survey results from the #TeamHHS all staff employee engagement survey.*

**What emerged was a need to focus on core operations so our #TeamHHS teams can do their work to support the Iowans who rely on HHS.**





## How This Plan is Structured

### STRATEGIC PLAN

**Strategic Priorities:** Major things we want to influence over the next three years.

**Primary Impact Areas:** The aspects within the strategic priorities that need an intentional focus to achieve our priorities.

**When We're Successful:** What we hope to see as a result of the plan.

### STRATEGY PLAN IN ACTION

**Strategies:** What we're doing.

**Tactics:** How we're doing it.

**Measures:** How well we're doing it.

This is a three-year plan that is intended to be dynamic, which will allow us to respond to emergent needs while moving operations of our new agency forward.

We will publish an updated Strategy Plan in Action as we go that outlines progress on our strategies and tactics. The overarching plan will not change, but the strategies and tactics will be updated.

## How We Will Use This Plan

The purpose and goal of this plan is to establish clear focus and direction for the next three years. This plan will serve as the framework to deliver on the mission and vision of the newly created Iowa HHS. Below are examples of this plan in action:

- ▶ Set Priorities for New Initiatives
- ▶ Connect Our Team's Work to Our Strategic Priorities
- ▶ Reflect and Embed Our Strategic Priorities in Our Communications
- ▶ Guide Our Day to Day Collaboration and Culture

# HHS Strategic Priorities



## CULTURE

### Elevate Organizational Health.

Advance and accomplish Iowa HHS initiatives by leveraging responsive leadership, an engaged and motivated team, effective internal communication, innovation and positive work culture.



## OPERATIONS

### Advance Operational Excellence.

Optimize Iowa HHS efficiency, resilience, and effectiveness through the integration of aligned technology and updated policies and processes, with focus on team collaboration and coordination.



## IMPACT

### Help Iowa Thrive.

Provide equitable access to health and human services resources helping individuals, families, children and communities thrive.

# Elevate Organizational Health

Advance and accomplish Iowa HHS initiatives by leveraging responsive leadership, an engaged and motivated team, effective internal communication, innovation and positive work culture.

## PRIMARY IMPACT AREAS

**EMPOWER #TEAMHHS:** Iowa HHS provides a dynamic, inclusive, diverse work culture. We will strengthen and engage our team by actively involving them in decision-making, encouraging their input and innovation. As Iowa HHS continues to evolve, we are committed to clearly defining roles, providing unwavering support and guidance, setting clear expectations to foster success and celebrating our achievements.

**ADVANCE ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Iowa HHS invests in our people to ensure individual, team and organization success. We will create avenues for professional growth, offer mentorship opportunities and define clear advancement pathways. We will leverage effective performance reviews and employee development processes to support retention and succession planning. We will take a holistic approach to talent acquisition that encompasses recruitment strategies to attract potential candidates and streamlines the onboarding process.

**ENHANCE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS:** #TeamHHS is well informed and have access to vital information. We will provide effective communication, ensuring transparent and timely exchange of information across all levels of Iowa HHS. We foster open dialogue, active listening, and constructive feedback to encourage collaboration, innovation, and knowledge sharing among staff members.

## SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE



Improved Employee Well Being



Increased Employee Engagement



Elevated Employee Voice

By prioritizing organizational vitality and implementing these initiatives, Iowa HHS will support a dynamic, adaptive, and thriving environment, better equipped to navigate challenges and seize opportunities, to achieve long-term success.



# Advance Operational Excellence

Maximize #TeamHHS collaboration and coordination through the integration of aligned technology and updated policies and processes, elevating unity, driving efficiency and improving effectiveness.

## PRIMARY IMPACT AREAS

**FOSTER INNOVATION AND FORWARD THINKING:** We want to reimagine the work of Iowa HHS. We welcome trying new things and new approaches to the work and firmly believe in the value of sharing the lessons learned. Iowa HHS is an environment where taking calculated risks is encouraged, mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth and accountability is emphasized. By leveraging data to inform our decision-making processes, we ensure our actions are grounded in evidence and insights.

**LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY:** Iowa HHS optimizes technology to succeed. We will evaluate and adopt the latest technologies to streamline and automate processes, improve data management and enhance service delivery. IT infrastructure must be scalable, secure and adaptable to future needs, ensuring the seamless integration of technology across all Iowa HHS divisions and functions.

**INSTITUTE AGENCY CONTINUITY:** Iowa HHS continuously assesses and mitigates agency vulnerabilities. We will review and update existing systems, policies and processes to promote transparency, accountability, and adherence to best practices. We will identify redundant systems, backup mechanisms, and contingency plans to minimize the impact of potential disruptions.

## SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE



Increased  
Internal and  
External  
Collaboration



Advanced  
Technology  
Improves Iowa HHS  
Performance



Optimized  
Iowa HHS  
Operations

By prioritizing organizational vitality and implementing these initiatives, Iowa HHS will support a dynamic, adaptive, and thriving environment that is better equipped to navigate challenges and seize opportunities to achieve long-term success.

# Help Iowa Thrive

Promote equitable access to health and human services resources helping individuals, families, children and communities thrive.

## PRIMARY IMPACT AREAS

**CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTION:** Iowa HHS is committed to keeping the people of Iowa safe. Guided by principled leadership, we are dedicated to authentic engagement and compassionate responsiveness, research-based decision-making processes, and systemic collaborations to address complex challenges.

**COMMUNITY COORDINATION & DEVELOPMENT:** Iowa HHS will simplify access to programs and services. We will create a welcoming and efficient “front door” that is a welcoming and streamlined entry point to HHS assistance, ensuring seamless connections to support when needed. Collaborations across programs will enable warm referrals, data sharing and maximizing expertise for improved communication, quality and efficiency.

**HEALTH:** Iowa HHS advances health and wellness for everyone. Through ongoing research, policy development and applying scientifically sound strategies, we will ensure all have equitable access to high quality health services that promote dignity, increase health engagement across populations, and develop integrated community systems.

## SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE



Children And Adults Are Safe in Their Homes And Communities



Expanded organizational capacity for community improvement work



Encourage Economic Self-Sufficiency by Providing Targeted Economic Supports



Improved Health of Individuals, Families and Communities

By prioritizing these concepts, Iowa HHS is focused on strengthening vital systems, services and programs that contribute to health, safety and wellness across Iowa.



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## Mission and Vision

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Iowa HHS provides high quality programs and services that protect and improve the health and resiliency of individuals, families and communities.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL VISION STATEMENT**

Iowa HHS is a trusted leader and partner in protecting health and providing high quality, equitable services.

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## Guiding Principles

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Iowa HHS provides high quality programs and services that protect and improve the health and resiliency of individuals, families and communities.

### **DATA-DRIVEN**

We make informed, data-driven, and evidence-based decisions to drive quality and improve results.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

We use public resources responsibly to improve lives through the programs and services we provide.

### **INTEGRITY**

We generate trust through honest, respectful, and reliable work that we can be proud of.

### **EQUITY**

We actively identify and remove barriers to access and inclusion so that we can provide all individuals an opportunity to succeed.

### **COMMUNICATION**

We communicate in a thoughtful and coordinated way to ensure individuals are well informed about our work.

### **COLLABORATION**

We facilitate meaningful partnerships that focus on the voices of the individuals and communities we serve.