



Joint Committee on Appropriations
REPRESENTATIVE MIKE DERBY, CO-CHAIR
SENATOR JEAN HUNHOFF, CO-CHAIR

March 25, 2024

Shawnie Rechtenbaugh, Secretary
Department of Human Services
3800 East Wells Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Letter of Intent Regarding Recommended Changes to Family Support 360 and Shared Living Programs

Dear Secretary Rechtenbaugh,

This Letter of Intent sets forth a particular view held by the Joint Committee on Appropriations (JCA) in approving your appropriation in the 2024 Legislative session. As such, this Letter of Intent seeks to supplement that legislation with specific policy guidance as approved on March 25, 2024.

While the guidance does not have the direct force of statutory law, it rests solidly on a long-standing tradition of Legislative-Executive relationships in South Dakota and it will be used by the Joint Committee as one basis for the fiscal oversight of your agency and its continued funding.

It is the intent of the JCA to have the South Dakota Department of Human Services, related to the Family Support 360 Program, implement the following recommendations from the Family Support 360 and Shared Living Program Assessment completed by Alvarez & Marsal in December 2023 on the timeline indicated in the final report.

- Add a page to the new DHS website for the Division of Developmental Disabilities' initiatives and let people know what's happening and what to expect. Use plain language. Update at least quarterly (page 19)
- Develop a complaint/grievance, or ombudsman process to help families raise issues and seek resolution (page 40).
- Develop plain language versions of written communications to build a common understanding.
- In 2025-2026, develop a work group that is a majority self-advocates and families to discuss the options and policy considerations, and recommend an approach forward for waiver amendments that prioritizes what people and families find to be the most important supports (page 48).
- Explore options for people in the CHOICES waiver who use Shared Living services to self-direct to increase access to respite services (page 43).
- Build upon existing requirement that new Family Support Coordinators receive training in Charting the LifeCourse to include a new requirement that all Family Support Coordinators receive training in the Charting the LifeCourse Framework (page 35).
- Improve Waiver Access by:

- Expanding on the initial quality assurance efforts already underway and develop a comprehensive QA strategy to drive continuous assessment and improvement of the customer intake experience (page 30).
- Increasing people’s insights into the application process by posting the application and an overview of steps/associated timelines on the website, along with plain language updates on the new process. Finish building the new consumer portal to give people a way that they can follow their application throughout the process (page 29).
- Provide “Information and Assistance” services to families who self-direct using the Common Law option. This can be done through a support broker waiver service, through contract, and/or through a staff person (page 41).

Essentially, the Department will involve stakeholders in the ongoing changes happening therein, and communicate readily about those changes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Representative Mike Derby
Lead Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Appropriations

Senator Jean Hunhoff
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Appropriations

cc: Russell Olson, Auditor General
Jim Terwilliger, Commissioner, Bureau of Finance and Management