



# **Child Well-Being**

## **Annual report to the board**



December 2025



# Introduction

Hennepin County envisions a community where all people are healthy and valued — and where all people thrive. We demonstrate that commitment most profoundly in how we serve children and families.

Since 2017, our work to build a system centered on child well-being has taken shape around supporting whole families and reducing trauma. This vision has guided us to invest in upstream support and trauma-informed services that eliminate disparities. Our workforce is larger, more stable and diverse, and our decisions are grounded in data and focused on real, measurable impact.

This year's report begins in the child welfare system with a look at strategies to support families before the need for intervention, followed by our efforts to preserve and reunify the families of children coming into care. Above all, we want to see children safe at home, in healthy, stable families.

We then look at the next phase of our work to eliminate disparities for Native American children in out-of-home placement. Our research into the disparities' root causes, and the lived experiences of numerous community members, produced seven recommendations that will guide our work into the future.

The rest of the report highlights the strategic work underway across Hennepin County and within Human Services to achieve our vision for child and family well-being.

We remain committed to the six recommendations of the Child Protection Oversight Committee in 2016. Countywide, we're listening to residents and integrating disparity elimination strategies to deliver the best possible outcomes for every child and family.



**Staying the course  
on what we know**

Our vision for the future of child and family well-being is one where all children and youth are thriving in safe, stable homes. We get there by honoring families and partnering with integrity to deliver trauma-informed and culturally responsive services.

## Trauma-informed through the case continuum

### Prevention

All families face challenges — and all have strengths that can be uplifted. Prevention services meet families there, with support and resources to find health, stability, and well-being, before the need for system involvement.

The investment we've made to transform our system — focusing on well-being before intervention — has made a lasting difference in our community.

Child protection reports dropped in 2020 due in part to the pandemic, but have remained lower since. Fewer reports, along with better access to upstream support, have led to fewer children entering out-of-home placement — reducing trauma and keeping more families intact.

Last year, our Parent Support Outreach Program served 2,516 children and families. Of those who completed services, 87.6% did not experience a future screened-in child protection report.

Since 2023, we have received \$8.9 million in state, federal, and private foundation grants to continue innovating on how we support families before their needs escalate.

The next phase of our prevention work is deepening relationships with families and communities through opening and supporting the community-based operation of two Family Resource Centers.

We know true family-centered support isn't one-size-fits-all. Families do best when they can choose support that's right for them, from providers who understand their cultural and community contexts.

We also know promoting child well-being is a shared responsibility. We're most effective when we partner with organizations working with families in their communities.

Family Resource Centers are welcoming, community-led spaces that help parents strengthen protective factors like resilience, attachment, concrete supports, and social connections. Parents choose the support that fits their needs, with flexible access in person or by phone, as a one-time drop-in or through regular meetings.

Families are deeply engaged in shaping the programs offered. Each location is guided by a steering committee of residents and providers and a parent advisory committee. Staff are trusted community members who share families' backgrounds and support them with navigation, check-ins, and referrals.

Data from the National Family Support Network shows that communities with Family Resource Centers have significantly lower child abuse and neglect investigation rates than those without.

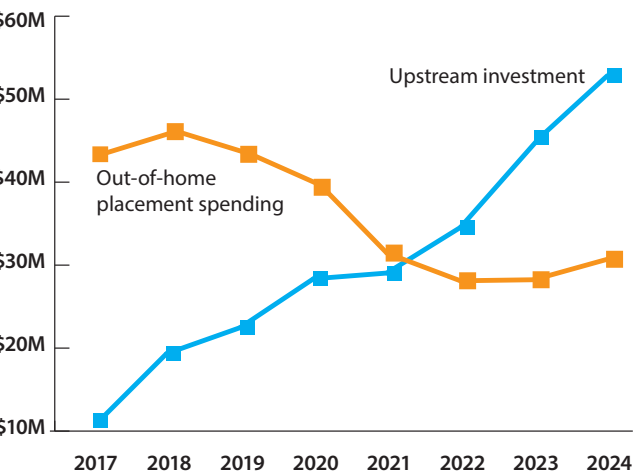
Hennepin County's first Family Resource Center will open in the south suburban region in 2026. A second is planned for South Minneapolis, with more to follow across the county.

# Out-of-home placement

While the total number of children experiencing out-of-home placement rose slightly last year, fewer entered care overall. The number of families receiving ongoing case management services also decreased. Several outcomes are possible for these families: they may be referred to prevention or another service like Children’s Mental Health; they may be connected with external community resources; or the case may be closed because no additional support is needed.

Since 2017, we’ve tracked how our focus on well-being has made a difference for children and families. Thanks to sustained investment from the Hennepin County Board, we’re seeing a clear trend: as prevention funding increases, out-of-home placement costs decrease.

## Out-of-home placement spending mitigation



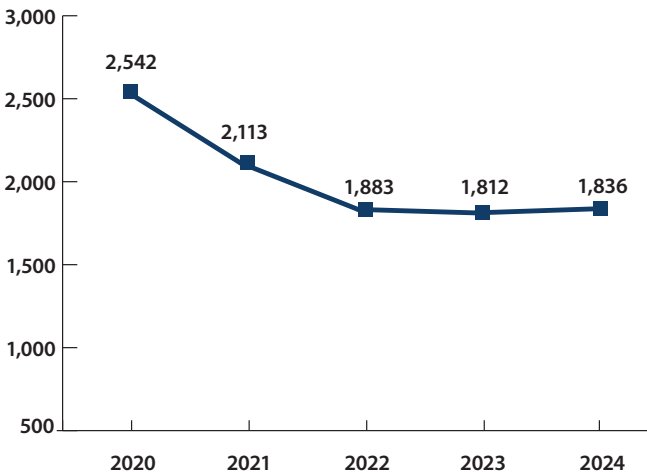
These investments span service areas and support a strong, community-based workforce. Median caseloads have stayed within our target range for four years, and workforce development efforts are improving families’ experiences: More than 95% of children in care meet monthly with their support team, and more families have a clear path forward. In the first half of 2025, nearly 83% of families had a case plan — up from 71.8% in 2023.

Key to this success is authentic engagement with families. Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) continues to be a powerful tool for keeping families together, increasing relative care, supporting reunification, and reducing disparities.

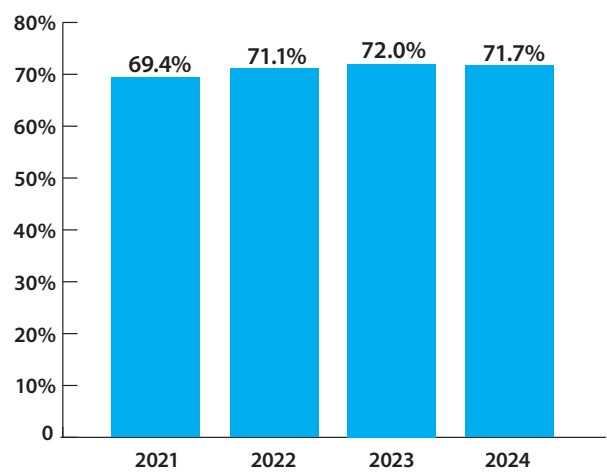
Before any transition for children, parents and support networks come together to plan for their safety and care. Timely meetings, especially when placement is imminent, help keep children safely at home and strengthen support networks.

Over the next 18 months, a \$250,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families will help us strengthen our use of FGDM to reduce the risk of terminating parental rights and improve outcomes for youth leaving foster care. Used as a restorative practice, we hope to repair and strengthen family and community bonds.

## Children in out-of-home placement



## Relative care





## Permanency

Our goal is to safely reunify families whenever possible. Going home remains the most common outcome for children in our system. Other outcomes include transfers of legal custody, adoption, or living with a previously noncustodial parent.

Our family-centered practice creates multiple pathways for children to preserve their family relationships. Transfers of permanent legal and physical custody (TPLPC) continue to outpace adoptions, and we consistently see significantly more children adopted by relatives than non-relatives.

In 2022, Minnesota statute changed to identify “permanency placement with a relative” as preferred permanency option. Previously, for children who could not return home, statute identified termination of parental rights and adoption as the preferred permanency option.

That change explains part of the noticeable shift in outcomes in 2023, that has been sustained in the years since by other elements of our practice. Across all permanency outcomes last year, 86% of children achieved permanency with family or kin.

Our structure and the way we do our work make a difference for families. This year we launched the Permanency program to better serve relatives stepping up to care for children in their families. The program expands the work of our Adoption team area to more accurately reflect the continuum of support we provide.

Under this new direction, the roles and responsibilities of adoption resource workers — now known as permanency resource workers — have expanded to include working with child protection case managers and families to support transfers of custody. The transition also supports changes in practice aligned with the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act.

Part of that change is having conversations about permanency sooner, with more voices at the table. Multidisciplinary teams come together with families and partners within three months of opening a case to address any barriers to reunification as quickly as possible.

Planning for children to return safely to their families — and working creatively to connect families with support and resources — has already led to at least one reunification in less than a month.

When families have the information they need to make informed decisions, and receive the support and resources they need to realize the best possible outcomes, permanency becomes more than a goal — it becomes a shared promise.

### Children exiting out-of-home placement (OHP) to TPLPC vs. adoption, 2021-present

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*
TPLPC	15.8%	15.6%	27.4%	26.4%	23.9%
Adoption	23.0%	24.1%	17.6%	15.1%	14.3%
Total number of OHP exits	941	751	683	736	502

\*through 9/30/25

## Permanency with a relative, 2021–present

	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025*	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reunification	412	43.8%	318	42.2%	252	36.9%	294	39.9%	210	44.7%
TPLPC	149	15.9%	117	15.5%	187	24.7%	194	26.3%	106	22.6%
Adoption with a relative	139	14.8%	128	17.0%	86	12.6%	78	10.6%	47	10.0%
Living with other relatives	48	5.1%	29	3.9%	20	2.9%	10	1.4%	14	3.0%
Non-relative permanency	191	20.3%	161	21.4%	138	20.2%	161	21.8%	93	19.8%
Total discharges	939	100%	753	100%	683	100%	737	100%	470	100%

\*through 9/30/25





# Workforce development

We're committed to creating a workforce that is inclusive, supported, and empowered. Guided by our strategic plan, we're working to ensure staff have manageable workloads that allow for meaningful relationships, creativity, and innovation — because when our staff thrive, so do the children and families we serve.

The median caseload among ICWA ongoing child protection case management workers increased slightly in 2024, and we remain at the upper end of our target range. Changes to our practice aligned with the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act may have an impact on caseloads in the future, particularly child protection investigations. So far in 2025, we've seen an increase in the number of days an assessment remains open. We're responding with new strategies to balance the workload and invest in diverse, well-trained and supported staff.

This year, we've launched efforts to streamline how cases move through our system. By reducing paperwork, standardizing processes, and removing barriers at every point in our continuum, we're making space for staff to focus on what matters most: connection and care.

We're also investing in learning that deepens our understanding of equity and healing. Anti-Oppressive Practices training helps staff explore systemic racism, understand their personal and professional responsibilities, and engage families in culturally responsive, trauma-informed ways.

At the heart of this work is safety — not just for families, but for our staff. With the Collaborative Safety approach, we're creating a culture where staff are supported to speak up, reflect, and grow. That culture is strengthened by training supervisors, managers and leadership in trauma-informed supervision and best practices when leading diverse teams.

We're already seeing progress: Turnover is down to its lowest rate in years at 5.5%, we have fewer vacancies, and we've retained 97% of the 60 staff hired this year.

With a continued focus on workforce development embedded in our strategic plan, we feel confident our caseloads will return to target range — and that our dedicated, caring team members can do their best work with families.

## Caseloads per worker

Ongoing child protection case management
ICWA* ongoing child protection case management
Child protection assessment/investigations

2021	2022	2023	2024
10	10	11	11
8	10	9	10
7	7	7	7

Note: Caseloads in December of each year  
\*Indian Child Welfare Act

# **The next phase of child well-being**

# Eliminating disparities for Native American children in out-of-home placement

In Hennepin County, Native American children are over 60 times more likely to enter out-of-home placement than white children. To address this alarming disparity, the committee shifted its focus last year to disparities specifically affecting Native American children in out-of-home placement, using a Hennepin County-wide lens.

We recognize the impact of racial disparities on children's well-being — in the child welfare system and in areas like health, housing, employment, and criminal justice involvement.

To understand the complex, intersecting issues that drive these disparities, we devoted the last 18 months to learn from research and best practices and engage with lived experience experts.

Drawing from the experiences and expertise of nearly 60 professionals and community members, we generated over 50 systems-level recommendations to improve well-being for Native American children and families.

We then categorized the recommendations to produce seven, overarching goals to guide our efforts and decision-making long-term.

The first six recommendations charge departments from across the county — including Behavioral Health, Children and Family Services, Public Health, the courts and the Hennepin County Attorney's office — to embark on conscientious partnerships with community organizations that move the dial in key areas:

1. Providing culturally responsive prevention resources
2. Using proven programs to promote healing and repair
3. Supporting parents with one-on-one relationships
4. Increasing access to mental and chemical health services that keep families together
5. Using supportive and compassionate language throughout the child protection system
6. Ensuring the minimum necessary information is collected by releases of information

The seventh recommendation entrusts this committee to continue embedding lived experience as a priority during implementation.

The work will begin this fall. While we know there is always more to learn, it is also clear that Hennepin County residents deserve both immediate and sustained action to address these disparities.

Interdisciplinary workgroups, co-convened by county and community-based subject matter experts, will make a two-year commitment. We acknowledge that efforts to eliminate disparities can and must continue beyond that timeframe, and we are dedicated to the long-term support of these recommendations with the hope that the work unfolding now will have positive effects on generations to come.

**Focusing on  
disparity  
reduction**

We are committed to eliminating disparities among our residents. Our policies, services and programs — in Human Services and across the county — work in tandem to drive disparity elimination and promote child well-being.

Our work began in the child protection system and has evolved into a network of integrated, family-centered solutions that work to eliminate disparities in multiple domains.

We continue to focus on improvements and innovations that respond to families' evolving needs so every child can thrive.

## Preserving families, advancing equity in Minnesota's child welfare system

Eliminating child welfare disparities is at the heart of our vision for child well-being. While we have made some improvements, we know there is more to do. Successful implementation of the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act will help us achieve that goal.

We believe very strongly that this is the right way to do our work. The foundation we've laid for child well-being over the last decade shows we're heading in the right direction. Since January 1, 2025, we've been phasing-in requirements of the legislation with a focus on learning and best practices for statewide implementation.

This is an effort of extraordinary collaboration: Across the county, with the Department of Children, Youth and Families, with Ramsey County, and with many community-based partners and stakeholders in our system. But most importantly, we're working with children, youth, and families themselves — centering their voices in decisions that preserve family and cultural connections.

Many strategies highlighted in this report are unfolding in support of implementation. Central to the law is providing active efforts to prevent out-of-home placement and reunify families.

What active efforts look like is unique to each family, but all will enhance the support provided to children and families experiencing disparities in the child welfare system in proportion to the inequities they face.

Many of our staff were already doing this work. Now, in partnership with our county attorneys, we've developed training to deepen our understanding aligned with the law's intent.

Requirements of the legislation are now being applied to 50% of eligible cases. As of Nov. 7, 2025:

- **88 cases (7.3%)**  
have opened to ongoing child protection case management.
- **84 children involved with 42 cases (3.5%)**  
have experienced out-of-home placement.
- Of these,  
**11 children involved in 5 cases**  
have been reunified under protective supervision.

What we learn during the phase-in period will shape the future of child welfare in Minnesota. We're seeing more clearly what we already knew to be true: We cannot do this work without our community-based partners. Services that support children and families before they enter our system, that offer mental health services and substance use recovery, and that promote cultural wellness and connection are more vital than ever.



## Supporting mandated reporters

Child protection reports in Hennepin County have dropped 36.06% since 2017. This is a significant shift that's kept thousands of children and families out of the child protection system each year.

Many factors are at play here, but supporting mandated reporters plays an important role. Most child protection reports come from mandated reporters — helpers like teachers, police officers, doctors, and social workers — who are legally required to report suspected child abuse or neglect. It's a serious responsibility with lasting impacts on children and families.

We've been building on our support for these important system partners. Specialized, in-person training goes beyond definitions and legal responsibilities to explore what happens after a child protection report is made, reflect on child safety, and answer questions in real-time.

Technical assistance goes a step further to help agencies examine disparities in their own reporting data. They review customized snapshots of data followed by training on implicit bias and historical trauma.

Each participating agency has made fewer reports related to neglect after technical assistance. Poverty can sometimes be confused with neglect, leading to a report being made. Instead, agencies build stronger ties with community partners and create inventories of local services to support families before a report is necessary. Ongoing consultation reinforces these practices.

Now, that consultation is available to any reporter with child maltreatment concerns. We've added a consultation option to our reporting line to allow for anonymous conversations with intake staff — protecting families from entering the system unless a formal report is necessary.

Staff can discuss maltreatment indicators, help callers understand what is needed to ensure safety, and make connections to services and resources during each consultation. Staff have provided 2,789 consults since the “warmline” launched in April 2024, resulting in more accurate, detailed reports and families matched with appropriate support.

Whether or not a formal report occurs, these one-on-one conversations empower mandated reporters to offer meaningful family support — helping professionals act with care, clarity, and confidence.



## Promoting whole families and healthy pregnancies

For 35 years, Project CHILD has supported safe pregnancies for parents working on recovery, keeping families together. While the prevalence and severity of substance use have changed in that time, our commitment remains steady — everyone deserves recovery support anchored in hope and connection.

Grief and shame are significant barriers to finding hope for recovery, especially if using substances has led to family separation or loss of custody. Even for pregnant people already in active recovery, the birth of another child can cause profound anxiety and increase the risk of relapse.

We're partnering intentionally, within Human Services and with our community partners, to build bridges of care and support for expectant parents that lift up their strengths — and help heal the past.

Going Home Together works in tandem with Project CHILD and health care providers to proactively create safety and hope for parents who've previously lost custody of a child due to substance use or mental health concerns.

Parents voluntarily connect with a social worker before their baby is born to document successful treatment and create a plan for their newborn to go home with them or someone they know and trust. So far this year, every participating family has gone home together.

For an additional layer of support, Project CHILD now offers programming to help parents navigate the trauma of family separation and continue to access the care they deserve after their baby is born.

Parents and newborns receive ongoing medical care throughout the perinatal period, including warm hand-offs to pediatricians specializing in caring for newborns with prenatal exposure to substances. Peer recovery services and parenting groups reinforce messages of healing and recovery with a caring support network of shared life experiences.

When growing families can receive care without judgement and avoid unexpected, traumatic separations, they can begin the next phase of their parenting and recovery journeys with strength, support and hope.



## Preparing youth in foster care for successful futures

When we think about prevention in child well-being, we don't just focus on avoiding harm. We also focus on creating the conditions for young people to thrive.

Prevention work spans our entire continuum and continues after youth and families exit the system. For youth in foster care, this means nurturing resilience, promoting stability, and empowering youth with the tools they need to shape successful futures.

With this in mind, we are redesigning our services for youth in foster care ages 14 to 21 to better prepare them for adulthood. While we have a strong foundation, the world is changing — and so are the needs of young people. Our goal is to evolve our services to meet these emerging adults where they are, with flexible, individualized support.

We've listened closely to the voices that matter most: the youth themselves. They told us they want mentors: Trusted adults who see them, believe in them, and walk with them. They want flexibility: Support that meets them where they are, when they need it. And they want to be part of the process, not just recipients of it.

Our vision includes a menu of personalized support including help with education, job training, housing, health, and life skills. But more than that, it includes belonging: youth connected to lasting relationships and opportunities to grow in ways that reflect their choices and the experiences of their peers.

A specialized unit of well-trained staff will lead this work, in authentic partnerships with community-based organizations who know our youth well.

We'll measure success through youth engagement and improved outcomes, including successful transitions to independence and lifelong support networks.

The redesign will launch in 2026, bringing expanded services, staff training, and stronger partnerships. Together, we're building a future where every young person in foster care feels seen, supported, and ready to thrive.

## Supporting family health in children's earliest moments

For families with young children, timing is everything. The earlier we can support new parents or intervene in a developmental need, the stronger the foundation families will have to support child well-being long term.

Over the last 6 years, we've made significant investments in family health programs that focus on prevention and building on families' strengths. Using a public health lens, programming wraps around the whole family, offering support throughout the life course.

Since 2023, family home visiting has provided social, emotional, health and parenting support to new families that are disproportionately impacted by economic, social and environmental disparities.

These evidence-based programs work upstream to mitigate adverse childhood experiences. Families have access to prenatal and pediatric care, help to create a safe and healthy home, and support for parent-child attachment and interactions.

Last year family home visiting served 1,103 clients, 85% of whom were from racially and ethnically diverse communities including 38.5% African American and 2.36% Native American.

The maternal health initiative adds to that continuum of support with capacity building efforts in the community. Working for and alongside African American and Native American communities, the initiative creates new community-based partnerships to serve residents better — with quicker referrals, more coordinated care, and increased access to culturally responsive and trauma-informed care.

Between 2021 and 2024, over 5,800 residents received perinatal health care services and education through the initiative, and more than 3,700 health professionals were trained in infant mental health and trauma-informed care.

Investing in family health early can change the trajectory of a child's life — and strengthen the roots of entire communities. Every visit, every connection, empowers families with a base of health and resilience that lasts for generations.



## Filling a critical gap in our continuum of care

A small population of county-connected youth have significant needs due to complex diagnoses, behaviors, and trauma. Gaps and barriers in Minnesota's human services and juvenile justice systems mean these youth do not have access to appropriate care settings.

To address one of the most acute gaps in services, Hennepin County has developed a Youth Stabilization Center in Minneapolis.

With this bold action, we're leading the state. Children's residential crisis stabilization is a critical addition and distinct piece of a comprehensive continuum of care. It fills an important gap for youth who cannot remain safely at home, offering treatment and therapeutic supports while triage, assessment, and planning take place with families.

With 13 beds, the center is a small, secure setting with 24/7 program staffing. Services will be delivered by a community agency, with ongoing guidance from a community-led advisory group.

The design of the new space features a welcoming, non-institutional environment. For example, a countertop seating area in the center of the unit offers an informal space for youth and care providers to talk — just as families do every day in their kitchens or the heart of their homes.

Stays are short-term — 30–45 days — with programming that includes onsite education, individual and family counseling, and recreation.

Youth and families are at the center of service delivery, consistent with the national best practice System of Care framework and our own county values for equity, innovation, and the people we serve.

The center will begin serving youth in mid-December.



## Removing barriers to mental health care

As we continue building a system of care for children's mental health, we're removing barriers so all families can access the support they need, when they need it.

A longstanding Hennepin County service, the Mental Health Center expanded this year to fill a gap in services for our youngest residents — especially those who've experienced trauma.

Trauma services that meet the needs of children under 6 are limited, and families can experience months-long waiting lists in the community. We now offer assessments for young children to get them connected to support sooner.

Programming wraps around the family, providing evidence-based treatment for children impacted by trauma and their caregivers, and parenting support groups: peer support, parenting skills, and trauma skills.

Caregivers can also be referred for a diagnostic assessment and receive support for their own mental health concerns — which often have a direct impact on parenting.

That's an important offering to help Behavioral Health deliver on strategic goals to expand access and offer upstream help — even for the youngest ages.

Youth involved with juvenile court also have access to more timely mental health assessments and services when necessary. A collaboration between the courts, Children and Family Services and the Mental Health Clinic expanded juvenile court orders this year to connect youth with mental health assessments from their first appearance — to provide services and support as soon as possible.

Our continuum of mental health services is also there for families in times of stress or crisis. Family Response and Stabilization Services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When a family calls, providers meet them where they are within the hour, or at a scheduled time of their choosing.

There are no eligibility requirements for families to get help, and no concern is too small. Families receive immediate support that's followed by ongoing, culturally responsive care for up to eight weeks.

Since launching in 2021 and with increased hours and access, we've seen continued success in key outcomes. Youth are maintaining their living arrangements and avoiding emergency room visits and law enforcement involvement. That means more youth and families stable in their homes, connected to the supports they need to thrive.



## Safeguarding well-being through stable housing

Our vision for child well-being is best realized when our efforts unfold in partnership with other systems that serve families. Families often face complex and difficult hurdles in their effort to stay housed, and they need a team of people and resources to get there.

School to Housing is one of the most powerful tools we have to protect children at risk of homelessness. It's built on a simple truth: school staff often see the signs first—a child who's tired, anxious, or suddenly struggling. These educators become the bridge, connecting families to the help they need before crisis hits.

This year, we're focusing more deeply on families living in doubled-up situations—those staying with others because they have nowhere else to go. These families are often invisible in traditional systems, yet they make up 40–50% of those entering shelters. By reaching them earlier, we can reduce trauma and keep children in their schools, communities, and routines.

Support is available in over 180 schools across nine districts with the highest rates of student homelessness. Families receive tailored support, from emergency financial help to long-term housing navigation, based on their unique needs.

For families facing the most severe challenges, supportive housing offers a place to land where they can get out of crisis mode. Two communities, Vista 44 in Hopkins and Emerson Village in north Minneapolis, prioritize units for families in the child welfare system. Services are available on or near the site, and families can stay as long as they need to stabilize and achieve their goals for self-sufficiency.

These communities give families space to heal, rebuild, and move forward—especially those involved with child protection, where housing can mean the difference between reunification and separation.

In the last year, 100% of families at both locations have accessed support from the place they call home—and 74% have had no future maltreatment findings.

These efforts are part of a broader strategy to ensure all families in Hennepin County have stable homes, and our data shows it's working. In the last year, the number of families in shelter dropped by nearly 30%. That's not just a statistic—it's hundreds of children sleeping in their own beds, going to school with less worry, and growing up with the stability every child deserves.





## Reducing barriers to student engagement

Every young person deserves the chance to thrive — especially those navigating the challenges of foster care, parenthood, and justice involvement. We're investing in their well-being with a network of compassionate, upstream programs that help build strong foundations for a better future.

Connect for School Success supports students whose families face significant barriers to school attendance and engagement. Using a strengths-based approach, families work toward self-identified goals that support stability and long-term academic success. Since the program's launch in 2022, 477 students in pre-K through grade 12 have received services. Aligned with the county's disparity elimination strategy, 96% were students of color and 14% spoke a primary language that was not English. For families who completed services with the program, 93% achieved their self-identified goals.

Programs like TeenHOPE and Pathways extend that support by working directly with youth on probation and young parents, offering support and guidance toward educational and career goals. Young parents receive public health home visiting services for parenting education and reproductive health, and can remain in the program up to age 24 while pursuing school or job training.

Community outreach mobilizes youth's support networks to break down barriers, re-engage youth whose educations have been interrupted, and increase opportunity. Support with GED prep, online high school, career exploration, and paid internships promote college readiness and postsecondary success.

A Youth Advisory Board launched this year brings together youth ages 15 to 22 from across the county to influence programs, policies and decisions that impact their lives. Created in partnership with Well-Being, Better Together Hennepin, and No Wrong Door, this collaboration marks an important step toward amplifying youth voice and building a stronger, more inclusive Hennepin County.

Together, these initiatives reflect a powerful vision: youth and young families who are healthy, self-sufficient, and ready to thrive. Each year we honor these students by hosting a graduation ceremony celebrating their success and the challenges they've overcome. We recognize the extra mile they've had to go to achieve their goals and are honored to walk alongside them.

# Child Well-Being Advisory Committee 2025

Established in 2017, the Child Well-Being Advisory Committee helps guide and advise county staff and updates the county board on progress toward child safety and well-being outcomes. The committee is comprised of community and child welfare system experts.

October 2025

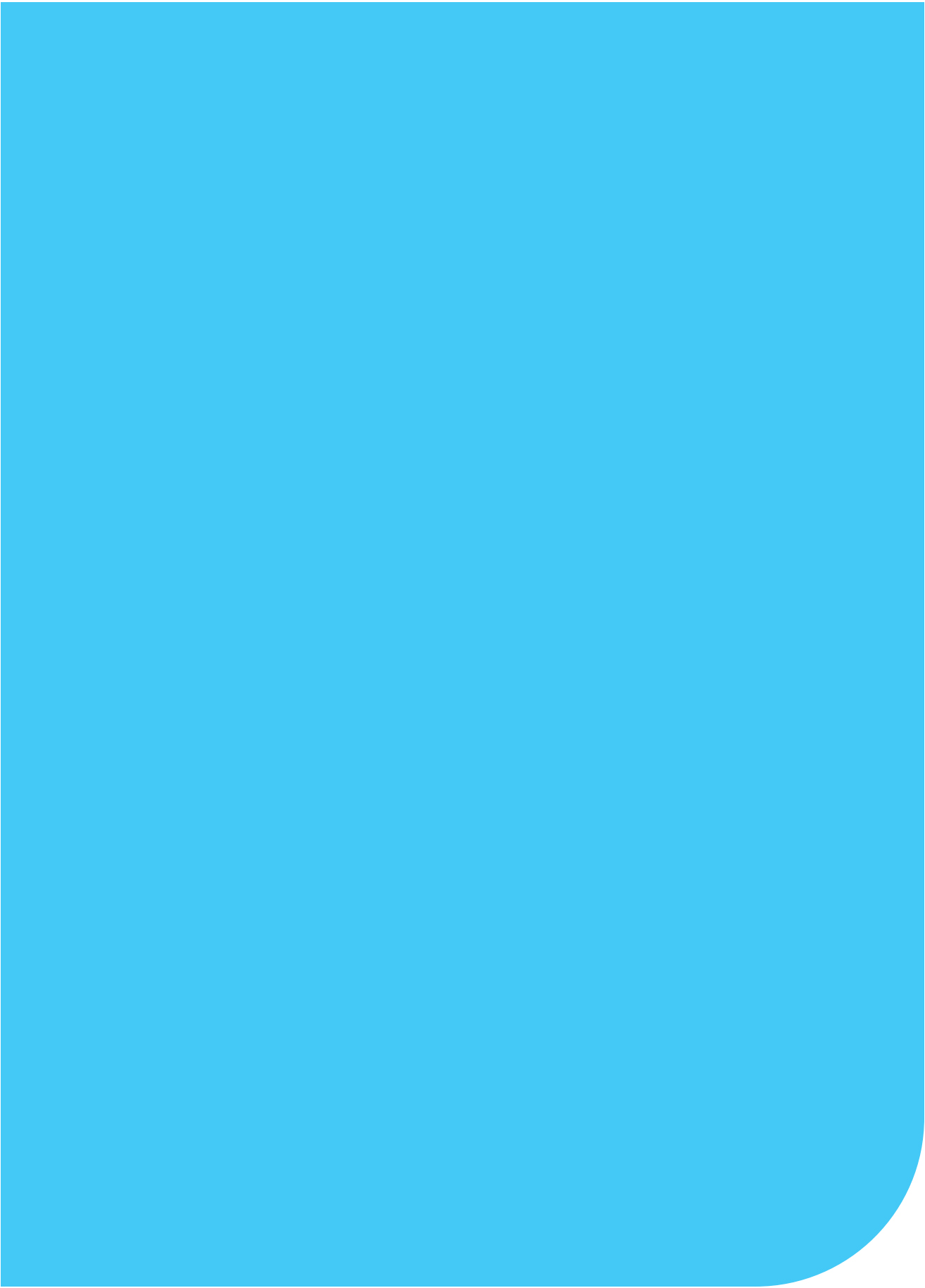
Member	Title	Organization	Term expires
Debbie Goettel	Commissioner, Chair	Hennepin County Board	Board
Angela Conley	Commissioner, Co-chair	Hennepin County Board	Board
Lola Adebara	Founder and CEO	Partnerships for Permanence	2028
June Barker	Community member and Living Skills Counselor	Connections 2 Independence (C2i)	2027
Josephine Dorsey	Foster care provider		2026
Todd Fellman	Judge	4th Judicial District	∞
Nancy Harper	Medical Director	Otto Bremer Trust Center for Safe and Healthy Children	2025
Dianne Heins	Attorney	Faegre Drinker Biddle and Reath	2027
Sara Hollie	Director of Public Health	Hennepin County	∞
Brandon Jones 2026	Executive Director	Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health	
Traci LaLiberte	Executive Director, Center for the Advanced Study of Child Welfare	University of Minnesota	2027
Anne McKeig	Justice	Minnesota Supreme Court	2025
Laura Newton	Program Director	Minneapolis American Indian Center	2028
Melissa Palay	Senior Director	Casey Family Programs	∞
Jessica Rogers	Executive Director	Connections 2 Independence (C2i)	2027
Jessica Ryan	Principal Attorney, Adult Representation Services	Hennepin County	∞
Mike Scholl	Senior Director	Casey Family Programs	∞
Ada Smith	Resident with lived experience	Connections 2 Independence (C2i)	2026
Shannon Smith	Executive Director	ICWA Law Center	2027
Rebecca St. George	Assistant Commissioner	Minnesota Department of s Children, Youth and Familie	∞
Michael Thomas	Behavioral Health Director	NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center	2026
Lori Whittier	Principal Attorney, Child Protection Division	Hennepin County Attorney's Office	∞

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# Child Well-Being Advisory Committee, 2024, continued

## Hennepin County staff

Jodi Wentland	County Administrator	Ex officio
Kareem Murphy	Deputy County Administrator — Health and Human Services	Ex officio
Betsy David	Interim Assistant County Administrator — Human Services	Ex officio
Lisa Bayley	Director of Safe Communities	Ex officio
Kwesi Booker	Director of Children of Family Services	Ex officio
Geniene Layne	Committee coordinator	Hennepin County
Michelle Lefebvre	Senior Department Administrator, Children and Family Services	Hennepin County
Lori Munsterman	Senior Administrative Manager, Data Analytics and CQI	Hennepin County
Pat Zagoras	IT Support	Hennepin County







## **Hennepin County**

Human Services

300 South 6th Street, Minneapolis 55487

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