



Multi-County Collaboration-  
Pipestone/Nobles

# Multi-County Collaboration

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Review of Current Arrangement:

What have we accomplished so far?

Pipestone and Nobles Counties share a total of 4 administrative contracts:

- Director
- Adult Services Supervisor
- Children's Services Supervisor
- Administrative Assistant (Case Aide)

**Total Savings for 2009 - \$160,000** (approximately \$80,000 per system)

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## Expansion of our work together: Where do we go from here?

- Continuation of contracting method is too complex (administratively) to exchange funds position by position.
- Contracts allowed us to “test the waters” but may not be necessary as we move forward together.
- Opportunities for 2009 and beyond - potential for growth/rise in productivity with existing work force - spread caseload growth across both systems –
- NCFSA planned growth for 2009:
  - Addition of one financial worker
  - Addition of two case aides
  - Each position costs approximately \$35,000 (salary/benefits).
  - Although we do receive State and Federal reimbursements for portions of these positions, we are saving \$105,000 in **ongoing infrastructure costs**, as we go into a time of increased uncertainty. Reducing (or at least maintaining) our infrastructure costs will help us continue to absorb budget reductions over an extended period of time.
- Centralize “behind the scenes” functions in order to re-assign/reposition existing staff into growth areas of each agency (i.e. Accounting, Child Support, Financial Assistance functions completed via mail etc.)

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- Begin/advance specialization in program areas of increasing complexity.
  - Specialization reduces the amount of time an inexperienced staff person will spend on an unfamiliar task (i.e. Adoption, foster care revocation, forensic investigations etc.).

## **Goals as we move forward:**

- Collaboration vs. loss of County Program Aide
- Reduction in administrative expense allows for increased investment (or fewer reductions) in front line interaction between staff and clients.
- We should grow both systems together to accommodate increasing community need without additional staff expense - increase staff productivity as much as possible before the addition of any new staff.
- When staff are added (eventually), the resource is shared between both systems, reducing the cost by 50%.

Public Health alternatives may be a natural extension of our work together, depending upon the Governor's proposal and other "region wide" initiatives.

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## **Timeline for progress:**

- Pipestone/Nobles need to begin thinking of ourselves as one agency in order to receive the next level of benefits a multi-county system can provide.
- Implementation of one management team across both systems has begun (full integration April 2009/duplication remains in one position)
  - One administrative team increases unity and consistency while also reducing any duplication that may currently exist.
- Consider a letter of intent or begin JPA discussions (June 2009)
- If current discussions regarding human service delivery continue, we may be in a good position to work with the larger region to pursue financial incentives (pilot opportunities within Region 8).
- As we move forward within the larger region, Pipestone/Nobles can negotiate from a position of strength, given our experience with each other and multi-county partnership.

# Closing

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## Closing remarks:

- Generally speaking, Nobles and Pipestone counties have historically both been under developed in terms of programming, best practices, preventative strategies, etc.
- Specific program issues require immediate attention while simultaneously attending to the details around the joining of our two systems. This will take some time and we can expect some issues will need to be overcome.
- The administrative staff (Nobles County employees), while very experienced and competent program managers, need to shape and lead our agency, moving forward.
- Leadership and vision across the management team will be a major point of emphasis in our next phase of development.
- The budget, overall, is in very good shape. NCFSA has been diligent about drawing down revenue from all available State and Federal sources. This has a significant impact on Nobles County's low per capita costs.
- We will need to carefully manage out-of-home placement expenses in order to achieve the budget targets for 2009 and beyond.

# Closing

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- Future areas of work:
  - Transit/volunteer driver program
  - Collections/Estate Recoveries
  - Child Support Centralization
  - Licensing Centralization
  - Accounting Centralization (cross training has already begun in this area)
  - Continue to explore multi-county collaboration within the region
  - ETC.