



CHILDREN'S DIVISION

Stakeholder Call

September 26, 2025

Scan to Register
for the next call



WELCOME

We're glad you're here!

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. HR Updates
3. Fiscal Team Updates
4. Safety Unit Updates
5. Administration and Prevention Updates
6. Permanency Updates
7. Training, PIP, and Field Updates
8. Adjourn

**Please type
your questions
in the chat!**

CENTRAL OFFICE STRUCTURE



Sara Smith
CD Director



Sara Littrell
Executive Assistant



Kate Watson
Deputy Director



Marcia Hazelhorst
Deputy Director



Christina Barnett
Designated Principal
Assistant



Brandi Caruthers
Fiscal Liaison



Pam Alston
Assistant Director



Christy Johnson
CD HR Manager and
Appointing Authority

LUNCH WITH THE CD DIRECTOR

If you're interested in participating in a networking opportunity with Sara Smith, the CD Director, register for one of the following dates using the QR code below! All lunches will be held 12:00 - 1:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted.



Scan to
Register



October 7, 2025 - Phelps County

Phelps County Courthouse
200 N Main St.
Rolla, MO 65401

October 15, 2025 - Kansas City

Children's Service Fund of Jackson County
2345 Grand Blvd. Ste. 1450
Kansas City, MO 64108

October 24, 2025 - Lincoln County

Lincoln County Health Department
Community Room
5 Health Department Dr.
Troy, MO 63379
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

HUMAN RESOURCE TEAM



Christy Johnson
CD HR Manager
and Appointing Authority



Brad Vance
HR Manager
Employee Relations



Jeremy Wilkerson
HR Manager
Position Management



Christine Steele
Recruitment/Retention
Unit Manager

HUMAN RESOURCE TEAM UPDATES

- As of August 31, 2025, CD has 1,965 full time team members on board
 - 1,524 of those are front line workers and supervisors
 - We currently have 88 vacancies
- Annual leave sweep October 31, 2025
- Open enrollment for insurance October 1-31, 2025
- Leave Track Update
 - Leave track is the program used for requesting and approving/denying leave. The information in leave track is then uploaded in to the SAMII HR system. For balances in leave track, they are only updated twice a month. 7-10 days after the pay period ends.

FISCAL TEAM



Brandi Caruthers
CD Fiscal Liaison



Hannah Siegel
Assistant Fiscal Liaison



Jennifer Schulte
Program Coordinator



Scott Montgomery
Fiscal Notes

FISCAL TEAM UPDATES

- FY27 Department Request Budget Books are being finalized and will be available online October 1, 2025
- We continue to work with Organizations to finalize FY26 contracts and Memorandum of Understandings (MOU's)
- The State of Missouri is implementing a new eProcurement system (MissouriBUYS powered by MOVERS). In order to continue doing business with, and receive payments from the State of Missouri, **ALL VENDORS** must immediately register in the new eProcurement system. Bid opportunities are being posted in the new system. Only vendors with approved registrations ("spend authorized" status) will have the ability to submit responses to bid opportunities. Contract awards will not be made to vendors without an approved registration. Supplier registration portal may be accessed at: <https://missouribuys.mo.gov/supplier-registration>



SAFETY UNIT



Marcia Hazelhorst
Deputy Director



Jeremy Bowman
Critical Investigations
Unit Manager



Kara Wilcox
Safety



James Harris
Out of Home Investigations



Casey Gilmore
Assistant Deputy Director



Katherine Gonder
CANHU Manager



Joanna Beckett
CCU Manager

SAFETY UNIT UPDATE

- The Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline is experiencing high call volume since children have returned to school
- If you are a mandated reporter, you can submit your [report online](https://dss.mo.gov/cd/keeping-kids-safe/mandated-reporters.htm)

Concerns of child abuse and neglect can
be reported by phone

800-392-3738

844-CAN-TELL

Mandated Reporters can also
report online at



<https://dss.mo.gov/cd/keeping-kids-safe/mandated-reporters.htm>

ADMINISTRATION AND PREVENTION

Includes: In Home Services, Residential Licensing, Human Trafficking, Constituent Services, FACES



Christina Barnett
Designated Principal Assistant



Kassy Baumgartner
FACES Unit Manager



Lauren Hall
Prevention



Molly Eckman
Policy Coordinator



Mason Blair
Constituent Services









Rachel Davis
Sex Trafficking Prevention



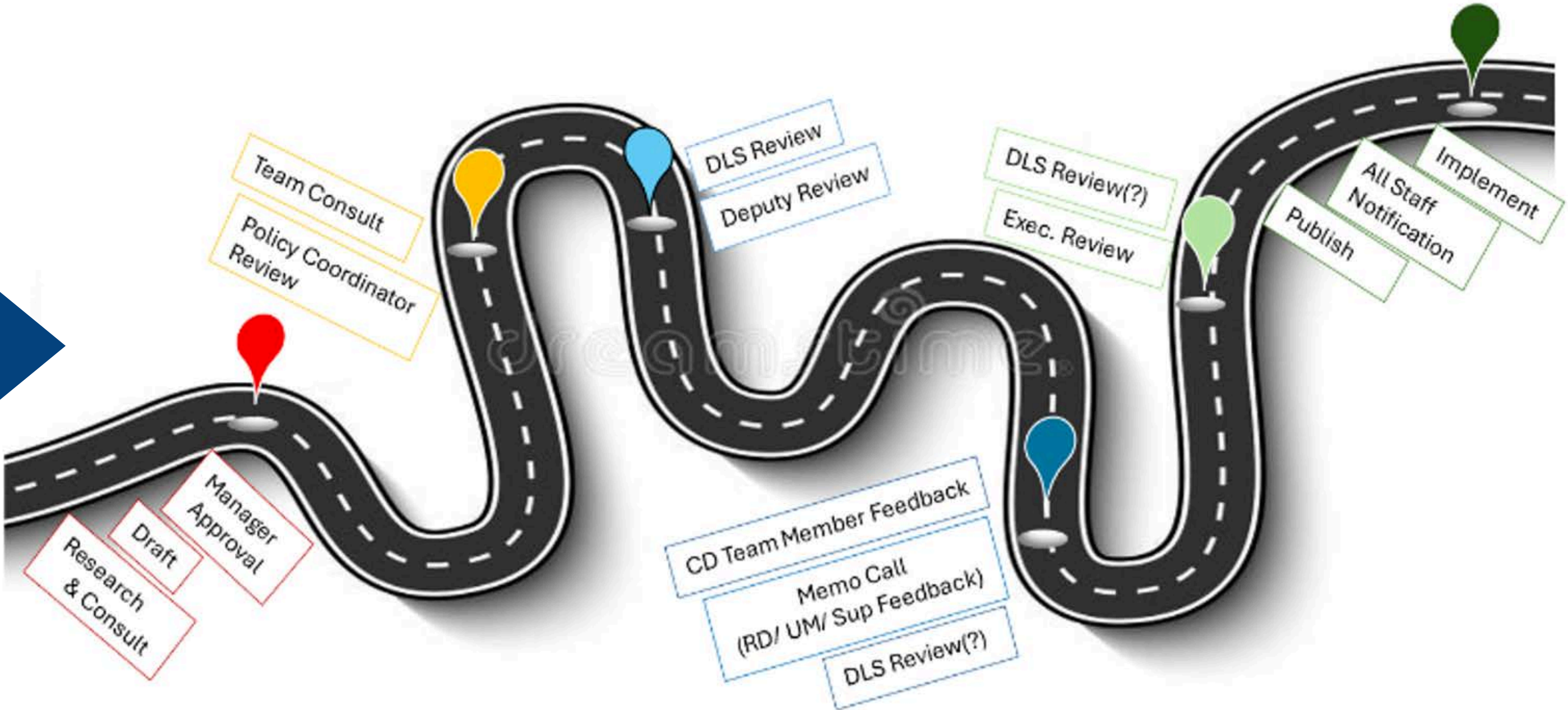
Jennifer Richter
Residential
Licensing and BSU

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Standardizing the Process

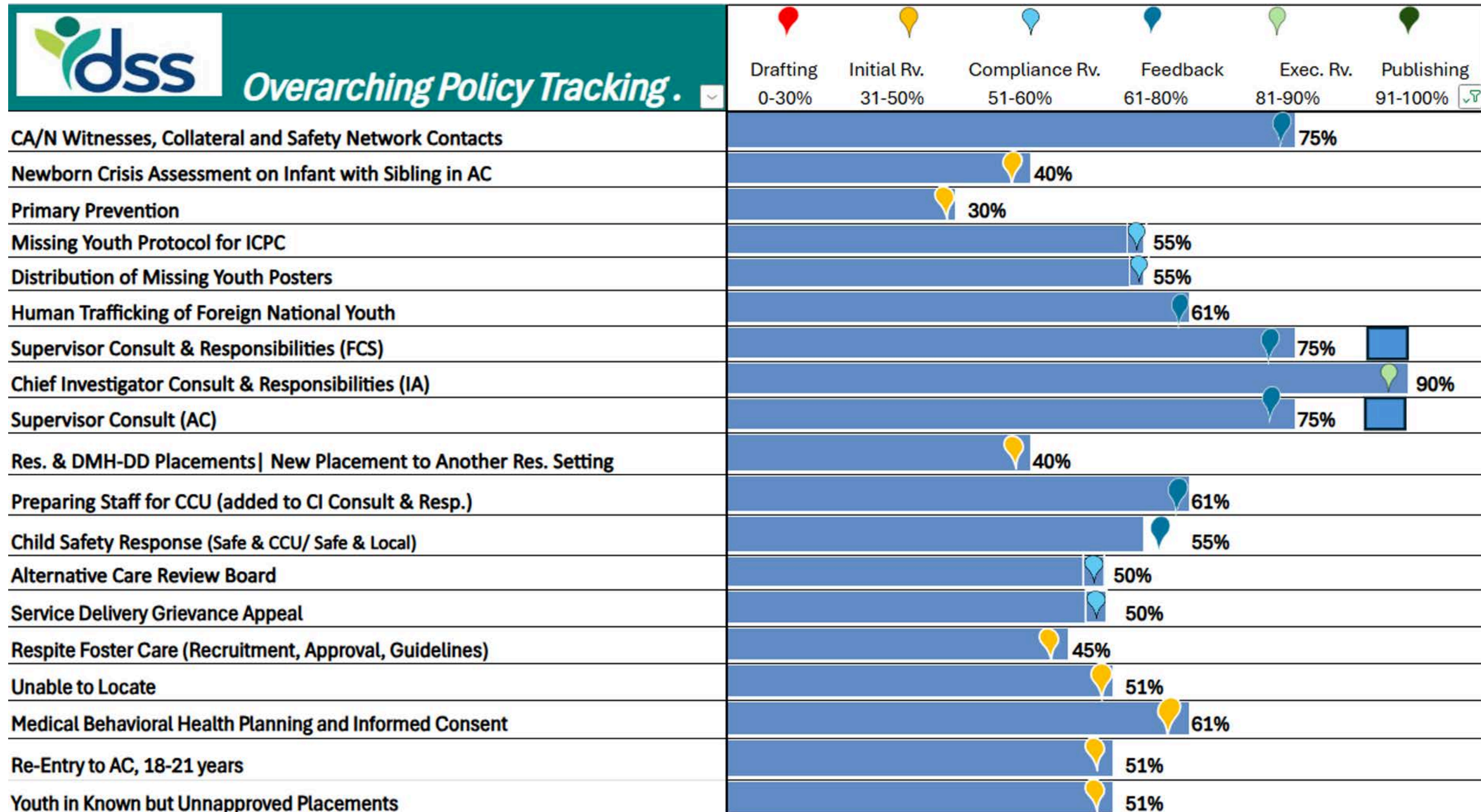
Policy Development Stages:						
Recommendation, Approval, and Assignment	 0-30% Policy Drafting	 31-50% Initial Review	 51-60% Compliance Review	 61-80% Feedback	 81-90% Executive Review	 91-100% Policy Publishing

Standardized submission prompts



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Monitoring Progress



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Showing Success: *Results of the enactment of HB737, HB121, SB43, SB71*



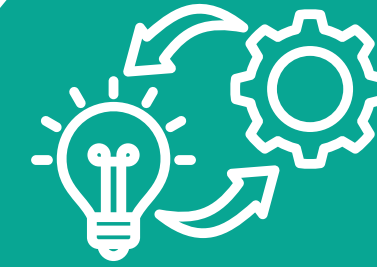
POLICY & PROCEDURES

- Background Checks and Walk Through for a Diversion Placement with a Non-Resident Parent
- Legal Definitions
- Relative Diversion Placement Background Checks
- Safe Place for Newborns
- Parental and Alleged Perpetrator Notification
- Social Security and Federal Benefit Application and Information
- Children's Income Disbursement System
- Resource Provider Licensing
- Agency Arranged Relative Foster Care
- Fingerprinting and Criminal Checks
- Reviewing Criminal History
- Family Care Safety Registry
- Child Abuse and Neglect Registry
- Diligent Searches



FORMS & COLLATERALS

- Glossary updates
- Fingerprint authorization letters
- Resource Home and Safety Checklist
- Foster/ Adopt Home Assessment Application
- Federal Benefits Eligibility Assessment
- Recommended Representative Payee Form
- Social Security Payee Change Process



IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

- Presentations to teams
- Collection of feedback
- Examples presented
- Office hours facilitated
- Strategizing continuous enhancements

Strategizing Continuous Enhancements

-
- Consistent Practice**
- CD Collective Feedback**
- Hardships**
- Policy is up for interpretation, we read and still don't know what to do
 - Differs by area due to the gray in writing
 - The courts & we write pla
- Current Work**
- Circuits v
 - We make
 - We do at
 - Circuits
- Recommendations**
- Add
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- VISION:**
- "A policy manual that of time"
- "CD Symposium Participant"
- Interpretation**
- CD Collective Feedback**
- Hardships**
- Missed updates to documents (email/ no rescind date)
 - Policy interpretations?
 - The organization is **disorganized**
 - **Things don't match section to section**
 - "We make policies just to make policies, the updates are so wordy" "bullet points... please"
 - It's **hard to understand**
 - Its **written in too many places**
 - Its just **too long**
 - It takes a long time to un
 - **Too many chan**
 - Each new
- VISION:**
- Transfer to a policy manual platform that is user-friendly, highly searchable, and easy to navigate with potential for AI-driven support offering a robust search functionality to improve accessibility and efficiency.
- Training**
- CD Collective Feedback**
- Hardships**
- Program staff need a designed timeframe to discuss with program workgroups what changes are coming **BEFORE** the policy implementation date
 - Different interpretations of the pr causes different variations of implemen regions
 - Its hard to understand and full just by reading it.
- Potential Quick Wins**
1. Policy Proposal Submission Guide
 - Is training needed?
 - By who?
 - In person or virtual?
 - Is a Faces Change Needed?
 2. Consideration of SME Recorded Training, for go-live date
- Forms**
- CD Collective Feedback**
- Hardships**
- We're referring to a lot of memos, from a lot of years
 - We have 600+ forms
 - Memos are used as policy
 - Policies sometimes have 15 memos attached, as needed information
 - Knowledge base
 - Forms create liability
 - Forms, processes are not
 - Standardization
 - Everything, but I
 - d by more than
 - d and
- Potential Quick Wins**
1. Transfer to Service Now as soon as we can
 - Increased search functionality
 - Decreased publishing time
 2. Policy Team to review Internal Chat Box from DSS Leadership Academy 2
- Harder Wins**
1. Service Now Platform Organization
 - Table of Contents restructure
 - Renumbering
 - Finding the duplicates and inconsistencies
 - Finding what forms, memos, PAs connect to what policy or procedure
 2. New/ Improved Case Management System
- VISION:**
- "We're taking away time from working with families, by chasing policy, information, completing forms and documentation."
- "CD Symposium Participant"
- Technology**
- CD Collective Feedback**
- Hardships**
- The search functionality is poor
 - **Hard to find things**
 - It takes a lot of "clicks" to get to where you need to be
 - Search feature for policy, forms, memos
- Current Work Arouns**
- Teams rely on emails and memory, and a lot of searching
 - Result to best guesses and hope
 - Google Search (Which may bring up outdated versions)
- Recommendations**
- User guide
 - **Fix search engine**
 - **Put things in one spot**
 - An internal facing chatbox (DSS Leadership Academy 2)
 - AI
 - OJC manual spreadsheet with links to policy
 - Guide for where to find things- an index
- Harder Wins**
1. Redefine
 - Memos
 - Practice Alerts
 - Policy Interpretations
 2. Centralize these "collateral" documents
- Potential Quick Wins**
1. Reminder of definitions/ Retire what is not needed
 - Memos
 - Practice Alerts
 - Policy Interpretations
 2. Restructure Memos
 - Memos introduce policy and procedures, and the "why" it does not explain the "what"

PERMANENCY & FOSTER CARE LICENSING



Kate Watson
Deputy Director



Heather Ford
Assistant Deputy Director
Foster Care Programs



Marcia Wetzel
FCCM Contract Oversight



Jill Pingel
HIS Unit Manager



Melissa Kenny
HIS Unit Manager



Rene Brinkman
Older Youth Unit



Lauren Masterson
Assistant Deputy Director
Permanency



Dawn Rector
Residential Services

FOSTER CARE UPDATES

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV):

1. CD secured a new contract with Foster Success on 9/12/2025.
2. Foster Success is working to add Missouri to their website and application portal.
3. At this time, our top priority is opening applications for this semester.
 - a. Foster Success will move quickly to disburse funds once applications are received.
4. CD will update our DSS Facebook page, ETV website, send a GovDelivery, notify caseworkers, notify foster parents, and notify previous ETV recipients once the portal is open.
5. Foster Success is working with their IT team to set a timeline for the portal and will communicate with CD about next steps.
 - a. Our target date for applications is October 7
 - b. This will be contingent upon Foster Success' IT department

CHANGES TO USE OF CHILDREN'S FEDERAL BENEFITS

Historically, federal funds received by Children's Division, on behalf of a child, were used first for cost of the child's care, with remaining funds being accessible to the child for other needs.

Social Security Administration is the primary source of federal benefits.

HB 737 amended Section 210.560 RSMo. Changes were effective August 28, 2025.

1. Federal funds will no longer be used for the child's cost of care. Can be used for specific "unmet" needs.
2. Funds will be conserved for the child in special financial accounts that do not interfere with asset limitations for any benefit program (e.g., ABLE).
3. Within sixty (60) days of a child entering custody – determine receipt or eligibility to receive benefits.
4. Annual reviews to determine whether the child may have become eligible for benefits.
5. In consultation with the child and the Guardian ad Litem, the division shall identify a representative payee and only when no other suitable representative payee is available shall the division be the representative payee.
6. Annual reviews to determine whether someone other than the division is available and is in the child best interests to become the representative payee.
7. Annual statement of all transactions provided to the child, the Guardian ad Litem and the child's counsel.

CHANGES TO USE OF CHILDREN'S FEDERAL BENEFITS

Public Consulting Group (PCG) is conducting an assessment:

- Existing policies, procedures and systems related to the administration of benefits
- Identifying gaps and opportunities for automation and efficiency
- Interviews of personnel

Assessment Report completed by October 31st with recommendations for:

- Statutory compliance
- Case-level analysis of current beneficiaries & suitable accounts
- Program and policy changes
- Operational enhancements for efficiency and accuracy

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR UPDATES



MO KIN-4-KID

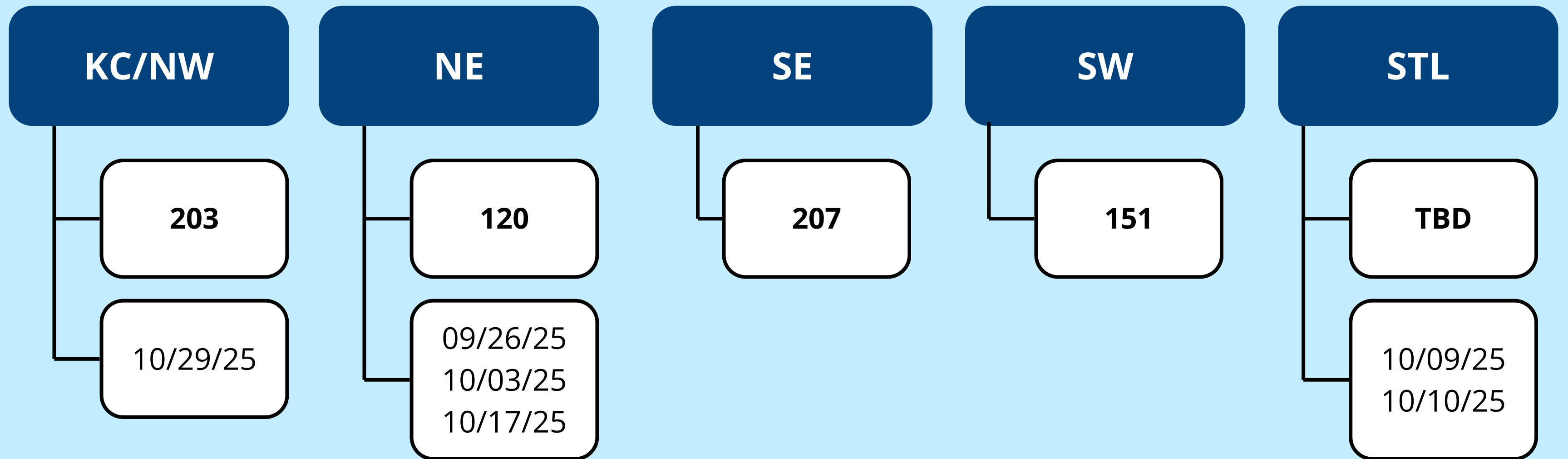
Missouri Kinship Navigator Program

- MO KIN-4-KID
 - ParentLink
 - The Central Missouri Foster Care & Adoption Association
 - Foster Adopt Connect
 - Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition
 - Family Forward
- Expansion of Legal Assistance Pilot
 - Parent Link
 - Foster Adopt Connect
 - UM KC's Child and Family Clinic
 - MU Child and Family Justice Clinic
 - Kid's Win
 - CMFCAA
- Kinship Navigator Program Model Research & Implementation
 - MU's Institute of Public Policy & the Human Services Research Institute conducting an Evaluation and Assessment of Approved, Evidence Based Programs
 - Relative Focus Groups



KINSHIP NAVIGATOR UPDATES

- 51% of children in foster care are placed with relatives
- Separate relative licensing standards
- Relative First Training



FIELD OPERATIONS



Pam Alston
Assistant Director



Shawn Boyd
Training and Professional
Development Manager




Julie Starr
QAPI




Annie Wilson
Training and
Professional
Development


Field Administration




Jennifer Chism
Northeast Director




Jana Wyman
St. Louis Director



Shasta Miller
Southeast Director



Chris Kimsey
Northwest & KC Interim Director



Lisa Crawford
Southwest Director

STRUCTURE - FIELD OPERATIONS

Northwest Regional Director

Chris Kimsey

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St. Joseph, MO 64501
Phone: (816) 387-2010

Christopher.R.Kimsey@dss.mo.gov



Interim Kansas City Regional Director

Chris Kimsey

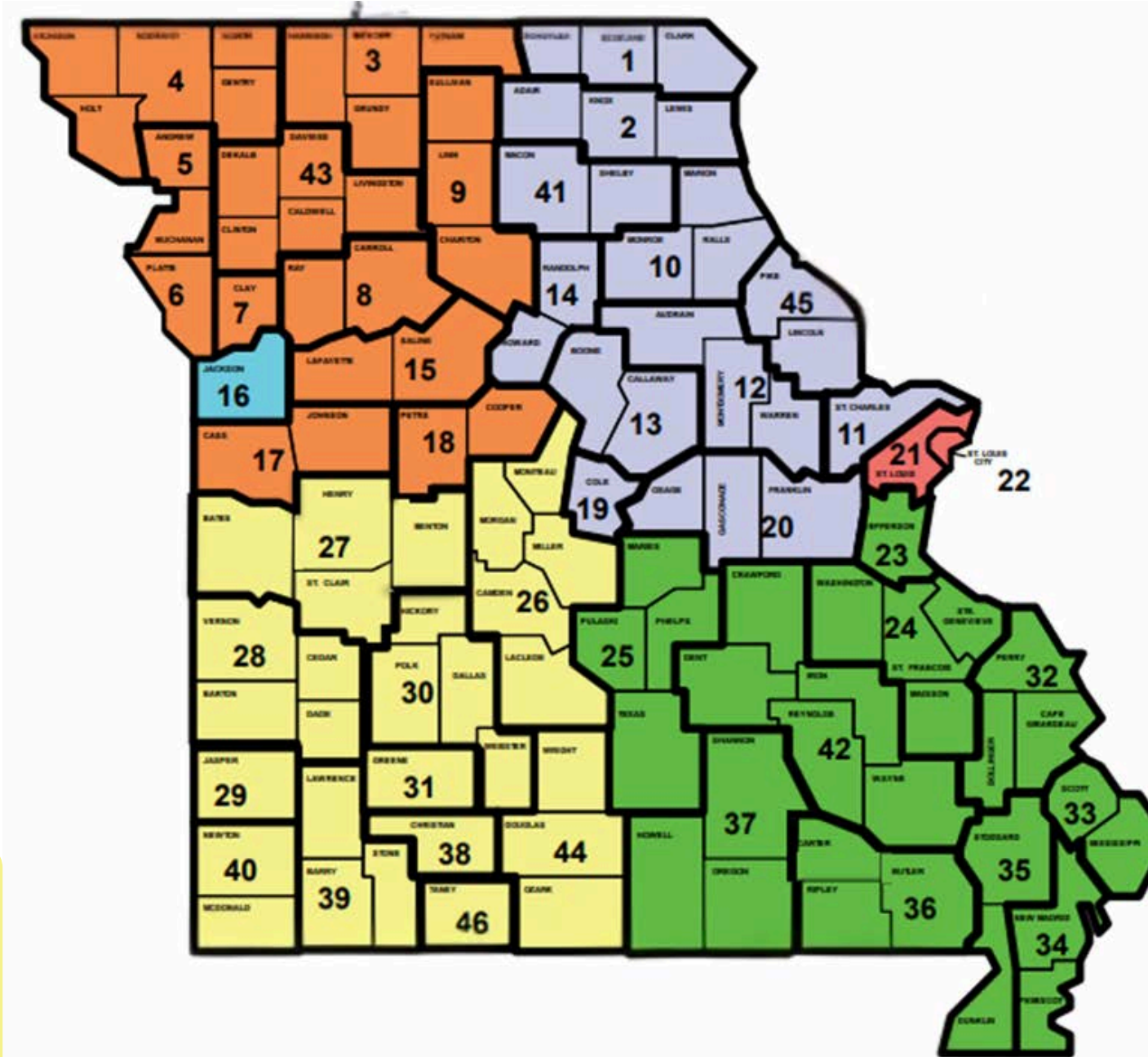


Southwest Regional Director

Lisa Crawford

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Northeast Regional Director

Jennifer Chism

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St. Louis Regional Director

Jana Wyman

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Southeast Regional Director

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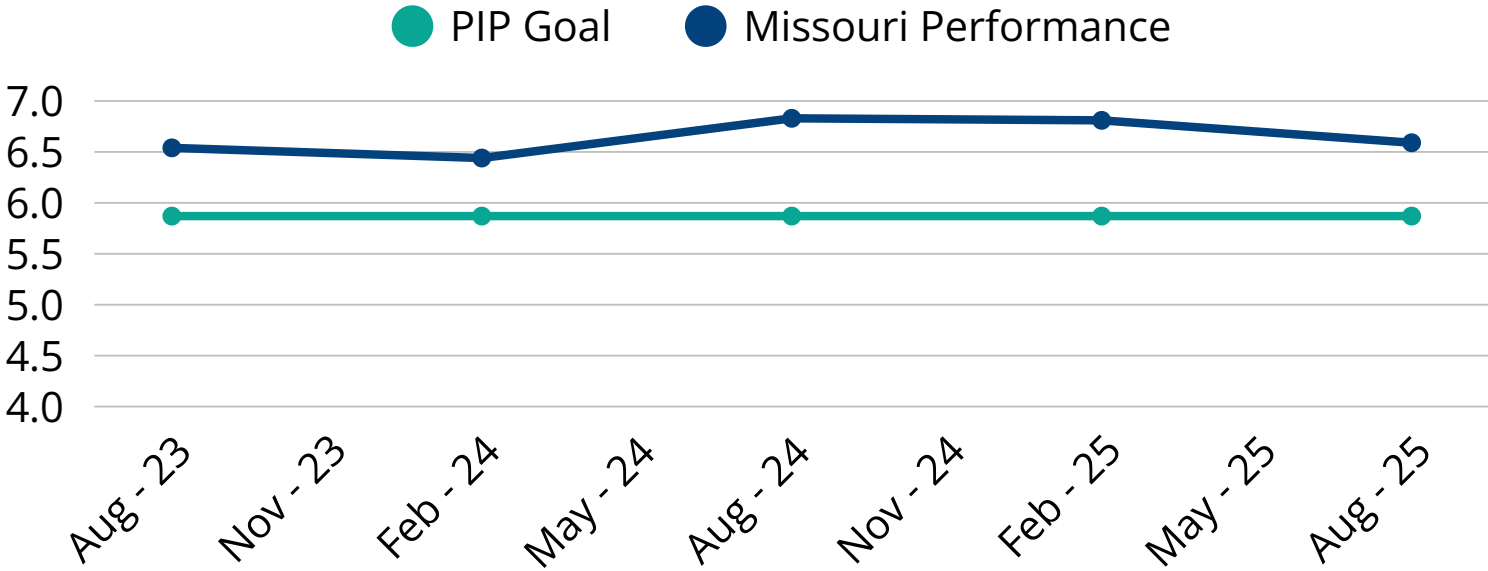
TRAINING

- Missouri Child Welfare Learning Institute (CWLI)
- In-person started September 8
 - St. Charles and Platte
 - Starting Springfield next week
- Training Unit - Leadership Symposium
 - Reset, Refocus, Rejuvenate
- Virtual Reality (VR) coming
- Supervisor Training - January 1
- New curriculum starting to be developed

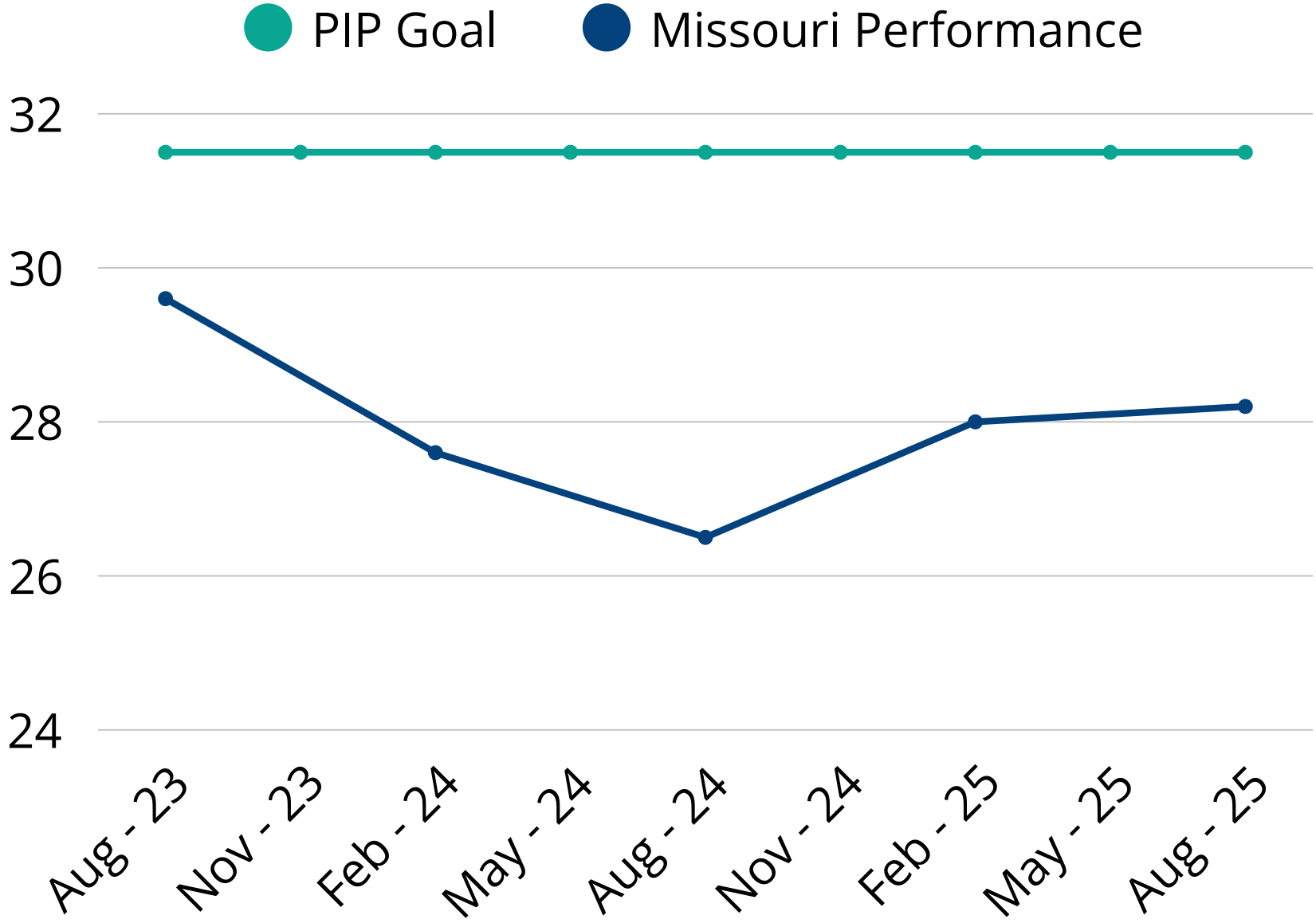
PIP - MEASUREMENTS & BENCHMARKS

Statewide Data Indicator	Observed Performance Goal
Permanency in 12 Months (Entries)	31.5%
Placement Stability	5.87

Placement Stability
(Lower is Better)



Permanency within 12 Months for Children Entering Foster Care



CFSR ROUND 4 CASE REVIEW RESULTS

	Baseline	Measurement Period 2	Measurement Period 3	Measurement Period 4	Sustained Improvement Goal	High Performance Goal
Item 1	69.70%	64%	75.80%	79%	77%	83%
Item 2	66.70%	76%	45%	67%	73%	79%
Item 3	52.50%	75%	52.50%	60%	62%	72%
Item 12	20%	38%	25%	33%	38%	55%
Item 13	38.40%	55%	45%	51%	52%	65%
Item 14	47.50%	83%	60%	63%	59%	69%
Item 15	25.20%	55%	36.80%	42%	41%	58%

Sustained Improvement Goal – must be met 3 times

High Performance Goal – can be met once

WHERE DO I FIND THE DATA?

Children's Division published data can be found on the Department of Social Services webpage. Follow this link to find information about Child Abuse/Neglect, Prevention and Foster Care Services, as well as annual federal reporting. <https://dss.mo.gov/re/>

Annual Reports

- **Child Abuse and Neglect Annual Report**
- **Child & Family Services Plans**
- **Children's Division Annual Report**

Monthly Reports

- **Children's Division Management Report**

Don't see what you are looking for or have questions?

Contact Julie Starr, Julie.L.Starr@dss.mo.gov

FIELD OPERATIONS

You can make a request for information at the link below



[https://dssmo.govqa.us/WEBAPP/_rs/\(S\(ja02xur0fg2uqynsgvqdodeh\)\)/SupportHome.aspx?sSessionID=1095086GEGKTKFBZOSSPHUJKZWZJSYYNADUDJCPT](https://dssmo.govqa.us/WEBAPP/_rs/(S(ja02xur0fg2uqynsgvqdodeh))/SupportHome.aspx?sSessionID=1095086GEGKTKFBZOSSPHUJKZWZJSYYNADUDJCPT)



SAVE THE DATE

October 31 at 10:30 AM

Hope to see you there!



Scan to
Register!



Our Mission

A close-up photograph of a diverse family of five. On the left, a woman with long dark hair and a green top smiles. Next to her is a man with short dark hair, wearing a yellow sweater, who is also smiling. In the center, a young girl with curly hair and a yellow sweater is being held and smiling. To her right is another woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue shirt, smiling. On the far right, a man with short dark hair, wearing a maroon shirt, is smiling. The family is all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is bright and slightly out of focus, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text 'Our Mission' is overlaid in the top left corner in a large, blue, sans-serif font.

Empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives.