



# DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES **STRATEGIC** PLAN

THE STRATEGIC PLAN defines the department's direction and guides decision-making in support of that direction. It provides clear and concise declarations about our overall business strategy, and remains intentionally high-level to empower strategic planning for needs and priorities at a division level.

Our department Mission and Cornerstones guide our strategic plan, which aligns with Gov. Spencer J. Cox's [Utah HOME Plan](#).

## OUR MISSION

We strengthen Utah's communities by connecting the workforce to new opportunities and providing services to individuals and families in need.

# CORNERSTONES, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

*"Support a family-friendly work environment."  
– Utah Home*



## CORNERSTONE: Employee Success

We promote a culture that fosters professional and personal fulfillment for our employees.

*In a competitive job market, it's more important than ever to retain talented staff.*



### **Objective: Increase employee engagement and retention**

- Employees feel welcome and believe that they have a future in the department, are empowered to innovate, and enjoy a harmonious bridge-building work environment

### **Strategy: Prioritize active employee communication**

- Prioritize proactive, consistent communication with employees
- Utilize multiple communication channels to broaden reach and to meet accessibility standards

*Efficient, effective operations are critical to the department and employee-minded policies can support and lead to sustainable employee performance.*



### **Objective: Improve employee experience**

- Employee-minded policy informs the improved employee experience

### **Strategy: Promote employee-minded policy**

- Leverage existing flexibility to support and promote policies that provide opportunity and benefit both the department and employees

*Individuals are often promoted to supervisory roles based on success in their former roles. Their previous responsibilities may, or may not, have included supervisory responsibilities. Because solid supervisory and leadership skills are vital to our success, we are committed to provide training and support to both new and incumbent leaders.*



### **Objective: Develop effective leaders**

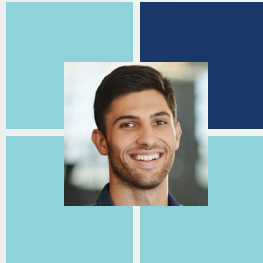
- Department employees advancing to leadership positions are well trained
- They are empowered to meet challenges and expectations and to be effective supervisors

### **Strategy: Deliver leadership training workshops and resources**

- The department will deliver a detailed, in-depth, ongoing leadership training program for new and incumbent supervisors, managers and directors

# CORNERSTONES, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

*"Utahns deserve first-in-class state government services."  
– Utah Home*



## CORNERSTONE: Customer Experience

We provide our customers with accessible, respectful and responsive service.

*We administer a wide variety of critical programs, many of which are federally-funded and state-administered. This limits the flexibility and control we possess. However, we will continue to enhance technology and to supplement this with in-person assistance where needed, to ensure continued access to these critical programs.*



### **Objective: Increase both digital and in-person access and availability**

- Invest in technology and broaden our digital reach so that those who can access our services digitally will do so
- Focus the increased capacity this creates to support in-person assistance ensuring access and opportunity to those who need it most

### **Strategy: Improve usability of online tools and resources**

- Invest in technology and digital access on a proactive and ongoing basis

*Because we administer and deliver heavily-funded programs, it is important to maintain public confidence. We must be accurate and timely. At the same time, we must maintain issuance accuracy and program integrity.*



### **Objective: Accurate, timely delivery of services**

- Deliver funds and benefits in an accurate and timely manner
- Recipients may include eligible Utah households, individuals, businesses, providers and partners

### **Strategy: Provide timely access to our services while maintaining accuracy standards**

- Combine operational efficiency with a customer-focused approach

*Because the benefits attached to many of the programs we administer are temporary in nature, we must continue to focus on helping our customers achieve long-term stability through employment and self-sufficiency.*



### **Objective: Empower customers to become self-sufficient through work**

- Connect customers to employment opportunities that enhance self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on short-term relief

### **Strategy: Utilize connections across divisions and programs to build bridges for customers to training and work opportunities**

- Leverage administrative responsibilities for multiple assistance programs to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- Utilize messaging that prioritizes work and other efforts that lead to employment
- Support policies and business practices that prioritize work and other efforts that lead to employment

# CORNERSTONES, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

*"Improve service engagement with underserved communities."  
– Utah Home*



## **CORNERSTONE: Community Connection**

We engage with our partners to support opportunities for communities to prosper.

*Because we work directly with a wide variety of customers and partners – including individuals in need, vulnerable populations, employers and community partners across the state – we seek to cultivate a deep understanding of those we serve and a wide network of collaborators. To support this goal we encourage the active participation and support of boards, commissions, councils and advocacy groups. This helps us ensure that we better understand ever-changing needs and are equipped to meet them.*



### **Objective: Understand and meet the rapidly changing needs of our customers through community partners**

- Proactive participation with boards, commissions, councils and advocacy groups informs our understanding of the needs of our customers
- Our network of partners helps mitigate the potentially negative impact that budgetary limitations, state compliance obligations, and federal compliance obligations may have on our customers

### **Strategy: Proactively coordinate with a wide variety of community partners and stakeholders**

- Continue to coordinate with boards, commissions and advocacy groups
- Cultivate new relationships as needed
- Continually enhance and refine our services based on feedback from community partners and stakeholders

*We administer a variety of programs, each with its own complex and expansive expectations and requirements. Our programs address many critical needs. At the same time, employers and customers may need additional services. We collaborate with other state agencies to ensure that these needs are met.*



### **Objective: Help customers and partners more easily access assistance and services through other state agencies as needed**

- Cultivate and maintain a global perspective
- Realize and respect that the needs of our customers may exceed our responsibilities and our services

### **Strategy: Collaborate effectively with other state agencies**

- Leverage partnership, collaboration and legally allowed information sharing to streamline operational designs and better meet the needs of our customers

# CORNERSTONES, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

## Community Connection Cont.

*Most Utahns are aware that we offer a variety of public assistance programs that are critical to those in need and to the economy. Many Utahns are not aware of the other services and assistance provided across the agency, such as educational and training assistance, assistance for people with disabilities and refugee resettlement support.*



### **Objective: More Utahns are aware of our full range of work and services**

- This awareness expands the number of Utahns who access the full range of our services

### **Strategy: Utilize multiple communication channels to educate Utahns about our work and services**

- Actively promote our work, our services and the dedication of our staff to customers and partners
- Utilize multiple communications channels as deemed appropriate including, but not limited to, news media, social media, printed materials, websites and newsletters

*“Government should continuously drive the best investment and use of state resources.”  
– Utah Home*



## **CORNERSTONE: Operational Excellence**

We deliver quality public service by implementing efficient solutions that are reliable and accurate.

*The programs we administer have far-reaching impacts. Rules, code and regulations guide them; any proposed changes to these must be examined and evaluated. This requires coordination with various entities, which may include the governor’s office, legislative chairs or committees, advocates, federal partners and the public.*



### **Objective: Program changes are fiscally responsible, serve our citizens and represent our state**

- Department rule, state code and federal regulations are aligned

### **Strategy: Examine rule, code and regulation regularly**

- Leverage these examinations to ensure proper alignment with
  - Stated strategic objectives
  - Federal regulatory compliance
  - Legislative directives
  - Operational symmetry

# CORNERSTONES, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

## Operational Excellence Cont.

*Department-level policy provides clear expectations and limitations. While divisions have flexibility, they must meet established expectations and cannot exceed defined limitations.*



### **Objective: Aligned departmental policy**

- Divisions have the flexibility to meet division-level needs and to simultaneously comply with overall departmental objectives

### **Strategy: Create clear policies**

- Outline departmental policies clearly
- Make clearly outlined policies easily available to those who must follow and enforce them

*Responsible and accountable budgetary practices are vital to our success.*



### **Objective: Utah's citizens trust that our programs are well managed**

- Federal funds are available to address existing needs
- State elected officials support and trust our responsible and accountable budgetary practices

### **Strategy: Ensure that the budget complies with both federal requirements and state-provided guidance and mandates**

- Ensure timely fiscal year budget closeout at an individual grant level and at the collective budgetary level
- Maintain proactive budget management practices

*Performance standards and outcomes include, but are not limited to, quality, volume, efficiency, and outcomes.*



### **Objective: Leadership, employees, and contractual partners clearly understand and meet department expectations**

- Employees are empowered to be effective stewards of their responsibilities

### **Strategy: Clearly define and communicate expectations**

- Clearly define, refine and better outline performance standards and outcomes
- Work to create transparency among supervisors and staff



**While this strategic plan is intentionally high-level, the executive director and department leadership will actively monitor all efforts made toward executing stated strategies and achieving objectives. Detailed information about department-level and division-level activities, efforts, and objectives will be tracked separately.**



## BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE

**Department Budget** – The Department of Workforce Services budget is outlined in the Compendium of Budget Information (COBI). The Department annually reviews this budget, and any budget requests, with the Governor's Office and the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget to ensure critical functions and needs are met. Legislatively, the budget is overseen by the Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee and approved by the Executive Appropriations Committee.

**Department Performance** – The Department of Workforce Services establishes performance measures for all line items and funding items. Performance measures are established in full coordination with the Governor's Office and the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. Performance outcomes are shared with the executive and legislative branch.

---

# ANNUAL WORK PLAN

## The Department of Workforce Services • Annual Work Plan

Cornerstones	Objectives	Strategies	Goals
Employee Success	<p>Increase employee engagement and retention</p> <p>Improve employee experience</p> <p>Develop effective leaders</p>	<p>Prioritize active employee communication</p> <p>Promote employee-minded policy</p> <p>Deliver leadership training workshops and resources</p>	<p>Active engagement and communication with employees, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly Newsletters</li> <li>• Regular All-Staff Zooms</li> <li>• In-Person Staff Visits</li> </ul>
Customer Experience	<p>Increase both digital and in-person access and availability</p> <p>Accurate, timely delivery of services</p> <p>Empower customers to become self-sufficient through work</p>	<p>Improve usability of online tools and resources</p> <p>Provide timely access to our services while maintaining accuracy standards</p> <p>Utilize connections across divisions and programs to build bridges for customers to training and work opportunities</p>	<p>Regular submission of legislatively defined Performance Measures with achieved outcomes, including the following programs:</p> <p><a href="#">SNAP Unemployment Insurance Operations and Policy</a></p>
Community Connection	<p>Understand and meet the rapidly changing needs of our customers through community partners</p> <p>Help customers and partners more easily access assistance and services through other state agencies as needed</p> <p>More Utahns are aware of our full range of work and services</p>	<p>Proactively coordinate with a wide variety of community partners and stakeholders</p> <p>Collaborate effectively with other state agencies</p> <p>Utilize multiple communication channels to educate Utahns about our work and services</p>	<p>Active engagement, publication and communication of Boards and Commissions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data</li> <li>• Goals</li> <li>• Achievements</li> <li>• Challenges</li> </ul> <p>Active publication and communication of Divisions and Programs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data</li> <li>• Goals</li> <li>• Achievements</li> <li>• Challenges</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">DWS Annual Report</a></p>
Operational Excellence	<p>Program changes are fiscally responsible, serve our citizens and represent out state</p> <p>Aligned departmental policy</p> <p>Utah's citizens trust that our programs are well managed</p> <p>Leadership, employees, and contractual partners clearly understand and meet department expectations</p>	<p>Examine rule, code and regulation regularly</p> <p>Create clear policies</p> <p>Ensure that the budget complies with both federal requirements and state-provided guidance and mandates</p> <p>Clearly define and communicate expectations</p>	<p>Active with state plan publications and communications, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TANF State Plan</li> <li>• SNAP State Plan</li> <li>• WIOA State Plan</li> <li>• Veteran State Plan</li> <li>• Child Care State Plan</li> </ul> <p>Active with annual plan publications and communications, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DWS Annual Report</li> <li>• Apprenticeship Report</li> <li>• Homelessness Report</li> <li>• Refugee Report</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">DWS Plans and Reports</a></p>



# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## The Department of Workforce Services • Performance Measures

Cornerstone	Performance Measure	Goal	Responsible Division
Employee Success	Internal review accuracy (All programs)	95%	Eligibility Services
	Internal review compliance (General Assistance)	95%	Workforce Development
	Accuracy of paid benefit (SNAP)	97%	Eligibility Services
	Unemployment Insurance separation quality	95%	Unemployment Insurance
Customer Experience	General Assistance positive closure rate	65%	Workforce Development
	Adults entered into employment rate	62%	Workforce Development
	Dislocated workers entered employment rate	83%	Workforce Development
	Child care subsidy determined in 30 days	95%	Office of Child Care
	Cash assistance positive closure rate	78%	Workforce Development
	Successful rehabilitation closure rate	55%	Office of Rehabilitation
Community Connection	Eligible households assisted with home energy costs	26,000	Housing and Community Development
	Affordable housing units funded by Olene Walker Fund	2,200	Housing and Community Development
	Number of individuals provided with low-vision services	2,400	Office of Rehabilitation
	Affordable housing units preserved or created	811	Housing and Community Development
	Total deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals served	8,000	Office of Rehabilitation
	Refugees placed in employment	230	Office of Refugee Services

# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Cornerstone	Performance Measure	Goal	Responsible Division
Operational Excellence	Benefit payments made within 14 days (unemployment)	95%	Unemployment Insurance
	Eligibility average days to decision	15 days	Eligibility Services
	Maintain unemployment fund solvency (Average High Cost Multiple)	1	Unemployment Insurance
	Accurate and timely department-wide fiscal administration	Zero audit findings	Division of Finance
	All programs and system have reviewed and mitigated identified risks	100%	Internal Audit

## Customer Experience Initiative

The Department of Workforce Services is committed to engaging with those we serve in an effort to assess and find opportunities to improve citizen-government experiences. Ensuring ample opportunity exists for those we serve to provide that feedback is critical. The department has set the following engagement goal via multiple feedback opportunities (“listening posts”) for State Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025).

Baseline Survey Engagement – 1,294 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023)

Target Survey Engagement – 20,000 (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025)