

A photograph of a diverse family of four sitting on a light-colored sofa. A woman with long dark hair, a young girl with curly hair, a man with a short beard, and a young boy are all smiling and looking towards a professional in a light blue shirt who is partially visible on the right side of the frame. The background is a simple, bright room with a framed picture on the wall and a window with white blinds.

EXPLORING A HYBRID APPROACH TO CHILD WELFARE

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REFORM & TRANSFORM

- In times of system reform and transformation, we must explore options and not simply react for the sake of change.
- We have been critically examining our child protection systems in MN since 2014, with many many recommendations and subsequent changes in practice.
- Perhaps it is time to explore changes to the structures in which we deliver those services.



STATEWIDE CHILD WELFARE HOTLINE

- One approach taken by other states is to share child welfare responsibilities i.e. State Hotline, County delivered services.
- An exploration to determine feasibility, cost and potential in MN was recommended in the 2015 Governor's Taskforce Recommendations. The study (recommendation #24) was not completed although some consultation with the Capacity Building Center for States occurred.
- The benefits and disadvantages of both a centralized Hotline AND the shift to a hybrid operated system need to be thoroughly identified and explored.



NOT STARTING FROM ZERO

There are many sources from which MN can learn and take lessons:

- Casey Programs report from 2018
- <https://www.casey.org/what-are-the-elements-of-an-effective-hotline-system/>
- States with recent shifts to centralized Hotlines
- States who have shifted away from centralized reporting
- MN's recent implementation of centralized reporting for adult protection – where critical lessons learned in that implementation process can be gleaned
- Research literature on effectiveness of centralized reporting systems



CRITICAL ANALYSIS

- The children & Families of MN deserve our full exploration of structural shifting in areas where there is reasonable belief that improvements could be achieved.
- Critical analysis and hypothetical application to the MN child welfare context is warranted. We have known this since 2015 and it is time to act.
- Only once all of the information has been collected thoroughly explored and discussed with state, county, tribal and community stakeholders – can we as legislators truly make our best decision.