



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

SUSAN OSBORNE • Deputy Secretary for Opportunity and Well-Being

March 27, 2024

Denita DeVega, Director
Nash County Department of Social Services
120 W. Washington Street
PO Box 819
Nashville, NC 27855

William W. Hill, JR. Director
Nash County Health and Human Services
120 W. Washington Street
PO Box 819
Nashville, NC 27856

Stacie Shatzer, County Manager
Nash County
120 W. Washington Street
Suite 3072
Nashville, NC 27856

Robbie Davis, Chairman
Nash County Board of Commissioners
120 W. Washington Street
Suite 3072
Nashville, NC 27856

Dear Mr. Davis, Ms. Shatzer, Mr. Hill, and Ms. DeVega,

The purpose of this letter is to summarize the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' (NC DHHS) engagement with Nash County Department of Health and Human Services Child Welfare Services planned transition and exit strategy, with full transfer to occur on March 28, 2024. As you are aware, on September 12, 2023, NC DHHS assumed temporary and direct control of Nash County Child Welfare Services pursuant to General Statute 108A-7(c). As set forth in the letter dated September 11, 2023, NC DHHS determined that Nash County was failing to provide Child Welfare

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Services in accordance with applicable laws, rules, and policies, and this failure posed a substantial threat to the safety and welfare of children in Nash County.

Since assuming control of Nash County Child Welfare Services, NC DHHS' team has worked with Nash County Leadership and Nash County Department of Social Services' staff to improve the provision of child welfare services. Specific activities include:

- Assessing the safety of children in all open child welfare cases
- Reviewing open child welfare cases to determine adherence to following law, rule, and policy
- Providing full-time management, supervision, mentoring, evaluation, and observation of child welfare activities
- Recommending contracts within on-site coaches to demonstrate the delivery of child welfare services while providing one on one real time coaching
- Securing all child welfare records and developing a system for checking in/out case files
- Establishing an afterhours protocol and an afterhours team
- Establishing case staffing processes
- Providing remedial and required training to all child welfare staff
- Developing a new organizational structure for Nash County Child Welfare include:
 - Establishing a new afterhours unit (3 new IATSW Afterhours positions and a new Afterhours Supervisor),
 - An Administrative Supervisor to supervise the Processing Assistants in Child Welfare
 - A Human Services Planner Evaluator,
 - 4 positions were reclassified from Staff Development Specialist II to a Human Service Evaluator III; a Social Worker III position to Senior SW III (Adoption Lead worker); a CPS Program Admin position from a grade 122 to 123; and a Social Worker III position from a 0.875 FTE to 1.0 FTE
- Hiring and training new child welfare staff members
- Establishing and revising new court preparation processes
- Advocating for competitive salaries to recruit and retain child welfare staff

During this time, Nash County Manager and Health and Human Services Director have hired a qualified Social Services Director and a qualified and experienced Child Welfare Program Administrator. Currently, NC DHHS has determined that Nash County Child Welfare Services is operating accordance to law, rule, and policy and that the leadership at the County Department of Social Services is ready to assume permanent and direct administration of child welfare services. The transfer of control will occur on March 28, 2024.

While NC DHHS is returning the administration of child welfare services back to the county, ongoing engagement and heightened oversight is required. Nash County Department of Social Services has developed an Intensive Transitional Plan approved by North Carolina Department of Social Services (NC DSS). During the Intensive Transitional Plan, NC DSS will remain actively involved by providing technical assistance, monitoring progress through a variety of means, and offering necessary support to Nash County Department of Social Services to ultimately complete the Intensive Transition Plan and no longer need NC DSS heightened oversight.

Thank you for your strong partnership through this challenging process. The process to reset and improve Nash County's Child Welfare Services could not have been accomplished without your ongoing commitment and support. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any member of my leadership team if you have questions or if we can be of further assistance in reaching our shared goals of protecting the safety and well-being of Nash County's children.

Sincerely,



Kody Kinsley
Secretary