

# AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES: Integrating Family Services (IFS) in Vermont

AHS ~ Integrating  
Family Services  
Management  
Team

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If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together.  
~African Proverb

*Testimony for Senate Education Committee ~ March 17, 2015*

# Integrating Family Services



## Vision

Vermonters work together to ensure all children, youth and families have the resources they need to reach their fullest potential.

## Mission

Integrating Family Services brings state government and local communities together to ensure holistic and accountable planning, support and service delivery aimed at meeting the needs of Vermont's children, youth and families.

# Why Integrate?



- ❑ The Agency of Human Services' six departments and community-based service providers operate within program and funding silos. The service gaps and inflexibility resulting from these silos make it difficult to effectively meet the needs of Vermont's children, youth and families.
- ❑ Integrating Family Services changes this by breaking down those silos and shifting strategic planning, practice, language, service delivery and other key aspects of Vermont's human services system so the resources available to children, youth and families better match their needs.

# Integrating Family Services

- IFS is an innovative approach spearheaded by the Secretary's Office in the Vermont Agency of Human Services.
- IFS is aimed at transforming how Vermont provides services and resources to support children and youth (prenatal to age 22) and their families, including:
  - Maternal and child health, which focuses on health promotion, prevention and wellness.
  - Early childhood development;
  - Mental health and social emotional health;
  - Developmental needs and disabilities;
  - Substance use and abuse;
  - Special health care needs;
  - Strengthening families; and
  - Integration and working partnerships with health care providers.

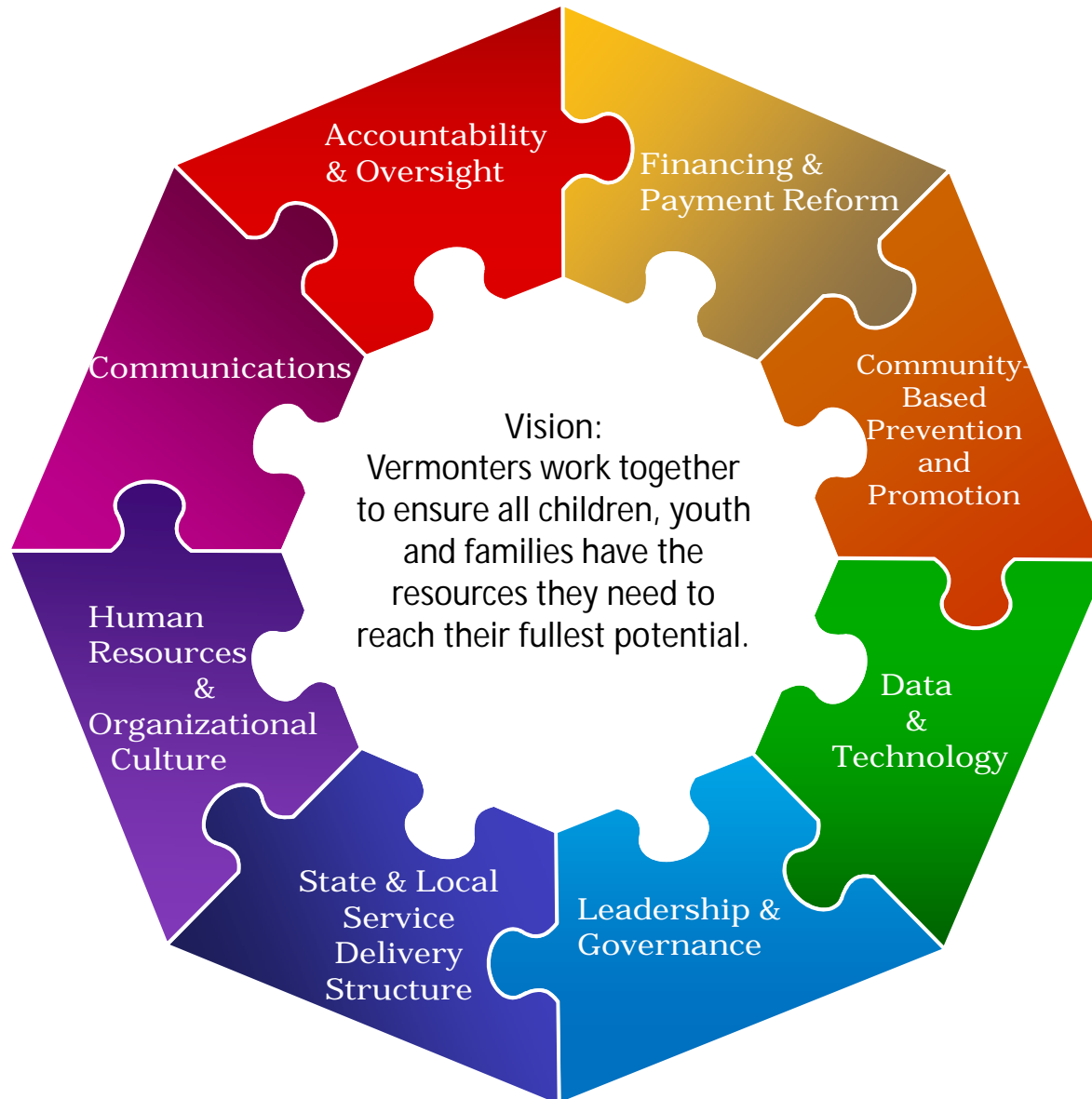


# What happens with an Integrating Family Services Approach?



- IFS brings children's, youth and family services together in an integrated and seamless continuum.
- Flexible funding allows service providers to meet family needs as they become known.
- Families can access supports and services based on need rather than program eligibility criteria.
- State partners shift their focus from counting clients and service units to measuring the impact of those services.

# The Eight Elements of Integrating Family Services



IFS moves us from talking about programs to talking about supports and services—getting families what they need when they need it rather than fitting their needs into a program based on its requirements.

IFS supports and promotes innovation.

Team is the theme!!!



# The Guiding Principles of IFS

These guiding principles give life and form to Integrating Family Services' vision and mission.

1. Promote the well-being of Vermont's children, youth and families. Policies, services and service providers are sensitive and responsive to the unique aspects of each family.
2. Build communities' capacity to provide a full range of resources in a flexible and timely way that is responsive to the needs of children and youth (prenatal through age 22) and families.
3. Focus on the individual and the family. Understand the child's needs in the context of his/her family.
4. Ensure that families' voices inform processes, plans and policies.
5. Adopt the Strengthening Families approach. Strengthening Families' five protective factors guide our work.
6. Invest in a skilled, competent and valued workforce. People working with children, youth and families need training, support and adequate compensation.
7. Balance innovation with families' experiences, research and data to inform decisions about how to best use available resources and achieve positive outcomes.
8. Assure continuous quality improvement. Data informs decisions and drives change at the state and local level.
9. Promote a common language, shared decision-making and cross-disciplinary team work.

# Key Components of the 8 Elements



## Accountability and Oversight

- Measuring, Monitoring and Improving Performance



## Leadership and Governance

- Documented governance and leadership structures at the local and state level that create clear decision-making authority and process



## Financing and Payment Reform

- Statewide consistency regarding what is included in bundled payments
- Formula-based allocation of funds to grantees



## State and Local Service Delivery Structure

- Services offered along a continuum based on the needs of families



## Community-Based Prevention and Promotion

- Community development focuses on promoting a safe and caring environment to encourage healthy child, youth and family development



## Human Resources and Organizational Structure

- Professional development is offered at the state and local level including Results-Based Accountability
- Unifying values, approaches and communication for state and local teams that drive effective teamwork



## Data and Technology

- Shared reporting capacity
- Integrated care coordination system



## Communications

- Align IFS communication with other efforts in the state and local areas
- Implement a communication strategy to share information including data, outcomes and performance reports



# The Agency of Human Services Outcomes

The following outcomes direct the work of the Agency and were enacted by the Vermont Legislature in 2014 through Act 168.

1. Vermont has a prosperous economy.
2. Vermonters are healthy.
3. Vermont's environment is clean and sustainable.
4. Vermont's communities are safe and supportive.
5. Vermont's families are safe, nurturing, stable, and supported.
6. Vermont's children and young people achieve their potential, including:
  - Pregnant women and young people thrive.
    - Children are ready for school.
    - Children succeed in school.
    - Youths choose healthy behaviors.
  - Youths successfully transition to adulthood.
7. Vermont's elders and people with disabilities and people with mental conditions live with dignity and independence in settings they prefer.
8. Vermont has open, effective, and inclusive government at the State and local levels.

The bolded outcomes were incorporated into how the IFS Approach will be measured

What are the Data Telling Us?

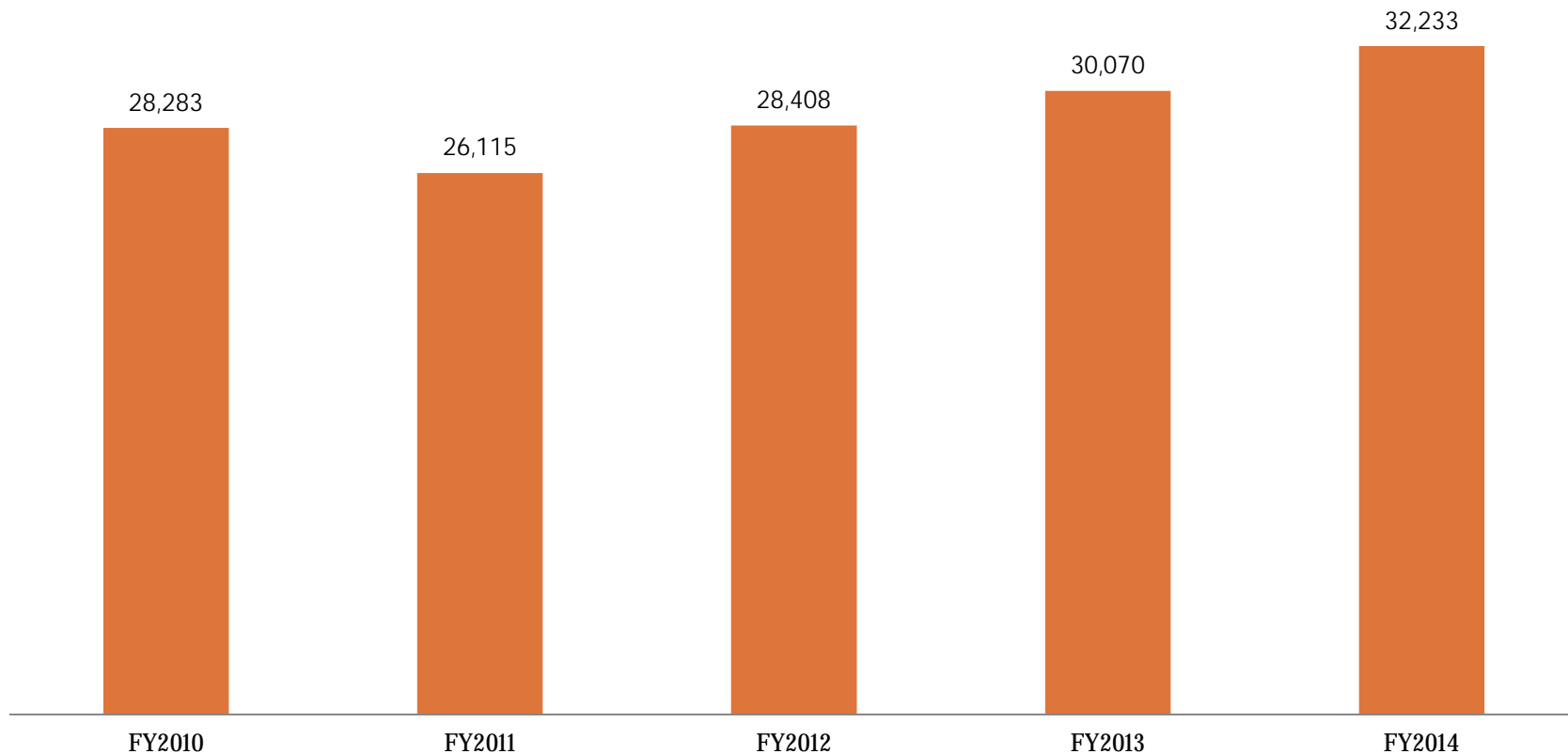
# Early Indicators of Success



# How Much?

## Addison - Total Hours of Service Provided

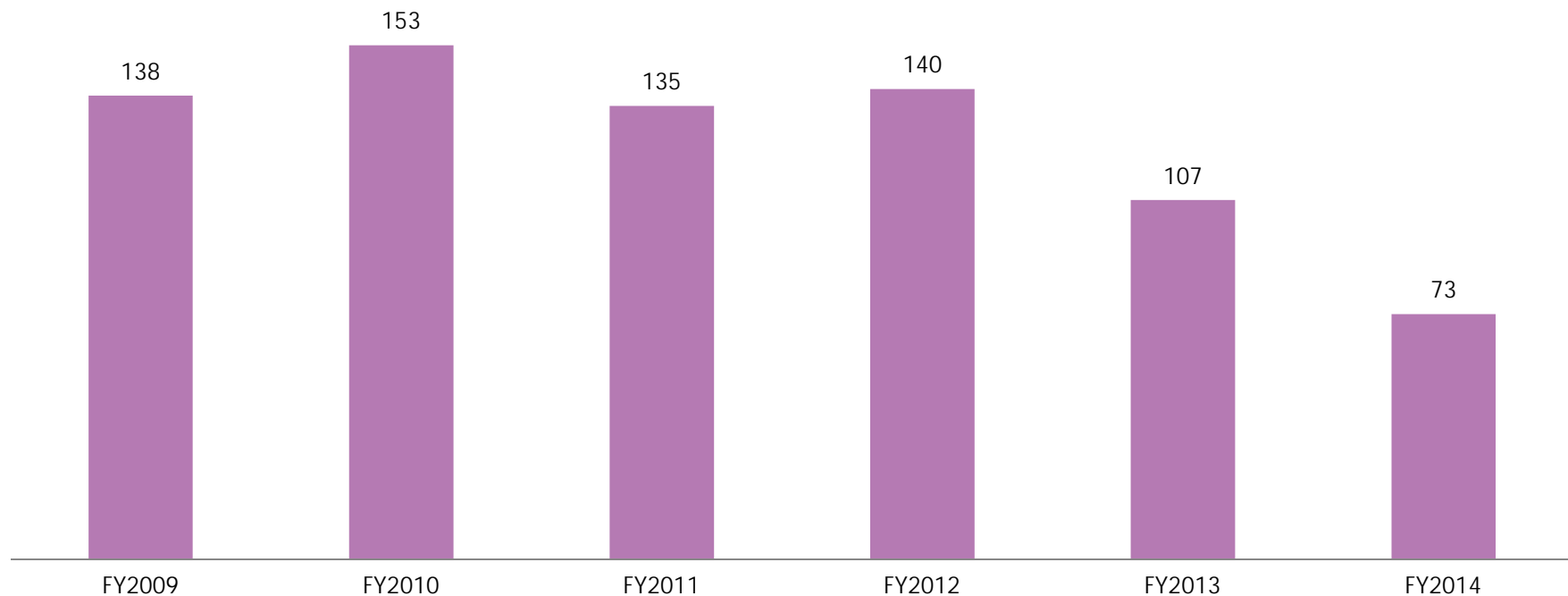
The first year of IFS in Addison was FY12. With the same level of funding they have been able to steadily increase the number of service hours they are providing.



# Is Anyone Better Off?

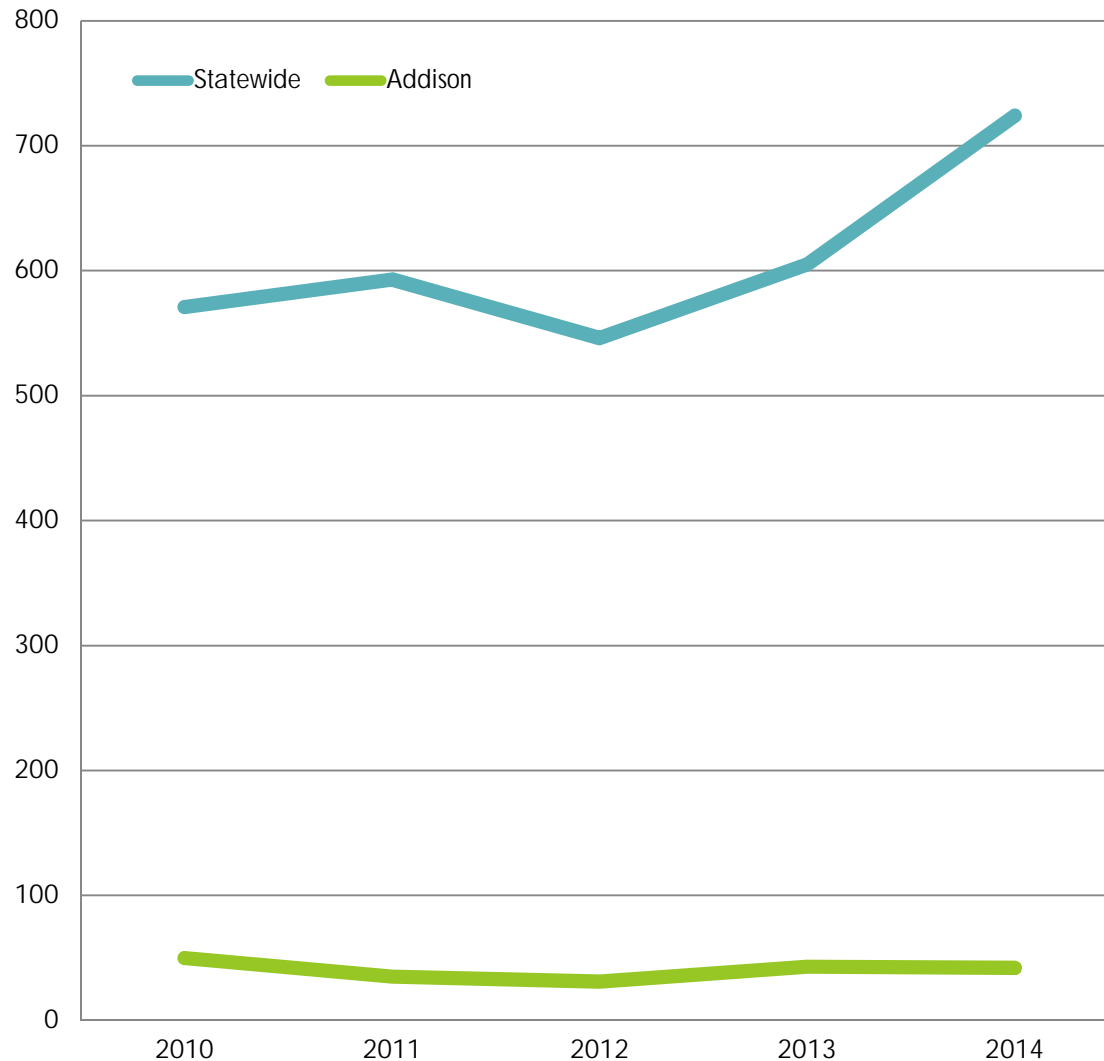
## Addison-Crisis Interventions

Since IFS implementation, there has been a nearly 50% decrease in crisis interventions needed for children because the community now has the flexibility to provide supports and services earlier than they were able to under the traditional fee-for-service model.



# Is Anyone Better Off?

## Rate of Children entering DCF Custody



What the data are telling us:

- NEW entries of children/youth coming into DCF custody
- Addison county, when compared to the other 11 districts, has a lower rate of children/youth coming into DCF custody

# Integrating Family Services Regions

Two regions have implemented the IFS Approach:

- ✓ Addison County ~ FY2012
- ✓ Franklin/Grand Isle ~ April 1, 2014



# For More Information Please Contact a Member of the IFS Management Team

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