

Consolidated Human Service Agencies

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a consolidated human services agency (CHSA)?

A consolidated human services agency (CHSA) is a single-county agency that provides any combination of local public health services, social services, Medicaid transportation services, veteran services or aging services. A county that creates a CHSA may direct the agency to assume responsibility for multiple human service functions in the county.

Are there any CHSAs in other North Carolina counties?

Yes, a total of twenty-two (22) counties have created CHSAs. In fact, many counties in the immediate region have CHSAs. These include, Montgomery, Richmond, Union, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg and Gaston. Another eight (8) counties have altered the governance of DSS and Health Department functions by placing one or both agencies under the governance of the Board of County Commissioners.

What are the potential benefits of a consolidated human services agency (CHSA)?

There are several potential benefits associated with consolidation. These include, improved service delivery given the ability carryout services and programs using a multi-disciplinary approach, a unified personnel system for all county personnel, operational efficiency and potential reduction of human service spending, collaborative training opportunities, revenue enhancement and more.

What happens to the independent Board of Health and DSS Board when a CHSA is formed?

The DSS Board and the Board of Health are both dissolved and a Consolidated Human Services Board is appointed based on the nominations of the current DSS and Health Department Boards.

Who serves on a consolidated human services board?

A consolidated human services board may have up to 25 members, appointed by the county commissioners. State law specifies that the board must include

- Certain professional occupations, including a psychologist, a pharmacist, an engineer, a dentist, an optometrist, a veterinarian, a social worker, a registered nurse, a psychiatrist, and at least one other licensed physician
- Consumers, advocates, or parents of consumers of human services
- A County Commissioner
- Members of the general public

What are the powers and duties of a consolidated human services board?

Below please find a summary of the primary powers and duties as prescribed by NC General Statutes:

- Set fees for services based on recommendations of the human services director. Any fees related to public health services are subject to restrictions on the amount and scope that would apply if the fees were set by a local board of health.
- Assure compliance with laws related to state and federal programs administered by the CHSA.
- Recommend creation of local human services programs.
- Adopt local health rules and participate in appeals related to enforcement of those rules.
- Perform regulatory health functions required by state law.
- Act as coordinator or agent of the state when required by state or federal law.
- Plan and recommend a consolidated human services budget.
- Conduct audits and reviews of human services programs.
- Advise local officials through the county manager.
- Perform public relations and advocacy functions.
- Protect the public health to the extent required by law.
- Develop certain types of dispute resolution procedures for contractors, clients and public advocates.

The consolidated human services board also has most of the powers and duties of a local board of health, including the following:

- Adopt local public health rules
- Impose fees for local public health services with the approval of the County Commissioners (except when state law prohibits local fees)
- Adjudicate disputes about local health rules or the local imposition of administrative penalties (fines) for violations of public health laws

What personnel policies apply to employees of the CHSA?

Employees of consolidated human services agencies are subject to a county's personnel resolution or personnel policies. Due to the fact that a consolidated agency administers certain federal social services programs, the policies/resolution must address and meet federal requirements for a merit based personnel system.