



1. **NEW [General, HCBS Case Managers] Employment Probationary Period:** *Will I serve a probationary period when I transition to the state?*

Home and Community-based Services (HCBS) county staff that transition to state employment on Jan. 1, 2020 will not have to serve a probationary period. If the HCBS county staff are currently on probation with the county, they will remain on probation when they transition to state employment, but their current probationary period will count towards their six-month probationary period. For example, if an HCBS county staff person started at the county on Nov. 1, 2019, when they transition to state employment on Jan. 1, 2020, their probation period with the state starts with 2 months of probation completed, and they would be set to receive their probationary evaluation on April 1, 2020 and will come off probation at that time if they are meeting performance standards.

2. **[General, HCBS Case Managers] Employment:** *Will I have to relocate to keep my job? Will I have a choice in where I am housed?*

No, no relocations are required.

Yes, everyone will have the option to continue working out of their current primary office as SB 2124 guarantees all access points will remain open.

3. **REVISED TO CLARIFY [General] Employment:** *Will I need to reapply for my job?*

No. County director roles will go away; however, other roles within the state and zones will open up, and offers will be made on a case-by-case basis. If an employee declines an offer made, then this would be considered voluntary resignation. If there is remaining work to be done, then the employee could apply for an open position once it is posted.

4. **REVISED TO CLARIFY [County Directors, HCBS Case Managers] Employment:** *If someone opts not to take the state role offered to him/her, can the individual stay in the zone or will he/she not have a job?*

Every current classified county social services employee will be offered a position in the zone or with the state. Positions offered to employees in the zone or with the state would be similar in job duties to current roles. If an employee declines the offer made, then this would be considered voluntary resignation. If there is remaining work to be done and the zone has an open FTE, then the employee could apply for that open position once it is posted.

5. **[County Directors, HCBS Case Managers] Salaries:** *Will salaries be decreased? If my pay grade/classification changes, then will my salary continue to remain at the current level or will it decrease?*

Salaries will not be decreased, unless there is an extreme change in role responsibilities. Though if the classification changes, and the employee falls far above compa ratio guidelines for their new classification, then the employee may not be eligible for raises for a period of time.

6. **[General, HCBS Case Managers] Salaries:** *If I get a raise in 2019, will that be taken away?*

The raise given in 2019 will not be taken away. However, depending on the size of the raise, raises for future years may be withheld to ensure fairness in compensation levels and increases across human service zone team members.

7. **[General, HCBS Case Managers] Salaries:** *Will county/zone employees be able to get raises when state employees don't?*

Since salaries for county/zone employees are being paid for by appropriations authorized by the Legislative Assembly, raises will be subject to the raises authorized in that biennial appropriation. For the 2019-21

biennium, the raises for county/zone employees are authorized as consistent with the state employee raises: that is, an average of 2% in the first year, which will be calendar year 2020, and 2.5% in the second year, which will be calendar year 2021.

8. **[General, HCBS Case Managers] Salaries:** *If I am making more than others in my similar role (e.g., HCBS case managers) across the state, will I still be eligible for raises? Will the cost of living in the western side of the state be considered?*

Most employees will still be eligible for raises regardless of their compensation level. An exception to this general rule may be employees who receive significant raises in 2019, for whom future raises may be withheld. The state does allow some geographical compensation differences based on cost of living.

9. **[County Directors, HCBS Case Managers] Salaries & compensation equity:** *Regarding job situation for staff, who decides which staff gets increases for salary disparities and how soon does this take place?*

County positions are currently under the classified service and are required to be within established pay ranges. This will not change. Salary inequities are to be expected and will be handled on a case-by-case basis as funding allows. Work has already begun to assess where those inequities may exist, and these will be addressed over time with collaboration between the zone director, zone board, and the department.

10. **[General, HCBS Case Managers] Benefits:** *Will my benefits change in transitioning to the zone or the state?*

Zone employees will transition to host county plans and policies for benefits.

State employees will receive the benefits outlined in Century Code. For state employees, the state pays the full single or family premium for health insurance coverage. Dental and vision are available to state employees through payroll deduction. The state contributes 15.26% for retirement. Current legislation also requires that the employee contribute 3%. This will remain in effect until legislation changes. This links here provide more information about NDPERS benefits: <https://ndpers.nd.gov/>, <https://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t54c52.html>

11. **[County Directors] Benefits:** *Do we adopt current policy and procedures of the administrative (host) county, or are we able to create own plan/benefits/etc. for the zone?*

Policy, procedures and benefit structures of the host county should be followed. These factors should weigh into the selection of the host county.

12. **[General, HCBS Case Managers] Benefits:** *What happens if benefits decrease in transitioning to a zone or the state?*

For employees that transition to the state, efforts will be made to ensure that they don't see a reduction in total compensation. For health insurance, the state pays the full premium for single and family plans, excluding vision and dental coverage. As it relates to retirement contributions, employees would be made whole on a pre-tax basis. For other benefits, including life, vision, dental, and disability insurance, these would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For other fringe benefits and work-rules related changes, these generally would not be eligible for a salary offset.

For employees that transition to the zone, host county policies and benefit plans will be followed. In some cases, the benefit structure of the host county may weigh in the consideration of its selection. In an effort to achieve consistency across the state between human service zone team members, whether they are employed at the zone or with the state, it is the intent that benefit structures should roughly mirror state policies outlined in Century Code. If the zone board decides that a shift in policies for a group of employees warrants a salary offset, they may seek approval from the Department on a case-by-case basis to grant salary increases to offset a benefit reduction.

13. **[General & HCBS Case Managers] General policies:** *Will I be able to keep my "flex" schedule?*

Most often, the answer will be yes. As a general rule, employees and their supervisor decide on a work schedule to meet customers' needs and work unit responsibilities, and that falls somewhere between the

hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday- Friday. Supervisor approval is needed to work more than 8 hours per day. These situations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

**14. [General] General policies:** *Will I have to fill out a timesheet?*

That depends on whether you are exempt or non-exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act. For state employees, the department utilizes an automated timekeeping system. Zone employees will track time based on the host county requirements.

**15. [General]: General policies:** *What happens to my leave balances? Does our administrative leave and state leave transfer?*

For state employees, unlimited annual leave, unlimited sick leave, and comp time balances up to 40 hours would be transferred. Employees may not have a balance of more than 240 annual leave hours on May 1 of each year. Zone employees will follow host county requirements.

**16. [General, HCBS Case Managers] General policies:** *When will I get paid?*

Most state employees are paid on the first of each month. Zone employees will be paid based on host county requirements.

**17. [General] Supervision:** *Who will my new supervisor be?*

In the short term, your current supervisor will continue in their current role. As implementation of various programs takes place going forward, supervisory responsibilities will be assigned, and you will be notified accordingly.

**18. [General, HCBS Case Managers] General policies:** *Will there be opportunities to work from home?*

Options to work from home would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The Department has a formal telecommuting policy/agreement which allows for various arrangements to be made.

**19. [HCBS Case Managers] General policies:** *If we remain in our current offices, what do we do about the days off the county gives us? What will happen to the staff that are not full time?*

Working hours for State employees would be based on State of ND laws/requirements. Zone employees will be subject to host county requirements. If a state employee is based in a office that is part of a zone, and their primary office is closed, then they would be expected to work from an alternate location.

**20. [County Directors] Transitions to state employment:** *Will state positions be decided prior to counties setting up duties for staff – child care licensing, long-term care, foster care licensing, home and community-based services case management? What happens if you are interested in one of these programs and the state doesn't pick you? Or would you have to apply for that position?*

In most or all cases, the state positions will be established and filled before the end of 2019. There will be a survey that goes out in June 2019 to assess interest in transferring to state roles. If a staff member has split duties (e.g., they do HCBS case management 50% of the time and early childhood licensing 50% of the time), the staff member will have the option to express interest in transferring to a role with the state. If interest in roles with state exceeds available positions, then the application process will become competitive. Through this process every current classified county social services employee will be offered a position in the zone or with the state.

**21. [HCBS Case Managers] Transition to state employment:** *If I'm not a full time HCBS Case Manager, where do fit in? Am in trouble of losing my job if I do HCBS Case Management, supervise HCBS/ Adult Services Staff, and Child Care Licensure – therefore not 100% HCBS? What happens to the current HCBS positions who are supervisors with partial caseloads? If I'm the only one trained in two small programs for the county, would I have to give them up?*

Every current classified county social services employee will be offered a position in the zone or with the state. If a staff member has split duties between a responsibilities, at least one of which is transferring to the state (e.g., they do HCBS case management 50% of the time and early childhood licensing 50% of the time),

the staff member will have the option to express their preference on what role(s) they would like to pursue. Consideration will be given to the employee's workload, experiences, and preferences on a case-by-case basis. Workload that employees no longer handle as a result of any transitions will be transferred accordingly, possibly to another staff member at the county or a neighboring county. If someone takes a specialized role with the state, they will work with the respective program 100% of the time, and any additional duties would be transferred over to another employee within zone.

**22. [General] Miscellaneous:** *What will the dress policy be?*

Current Department policy allows for business casual dress daily, with the understanding that based on role or job assignment the attire may need to change. Zone employees will follow host county policies.

**23. [County Directors] Miscellaneous:** *How would this work if an eligibility worker only did Affordable Care Act Medicaid eligibility, as the worker would also have to know SNAP since when workers work a case, they would authorize all services at once that the client applies for?*

This would need to be addressed in the work flow design.

**24. [HCBS Case Managers] Miscellaneous:** *Will the various FTE types have different payment rates? i.e., HCBS requires LSW – so does that mean HCBS specialist would theoretically be in a different grade / base pay?*

Current positions are classified today based on the duties assigned by the county. It is expected that there will be some variances and over time, those will be addressed. The requirement for staff to meet the minimum qualifications of their assigned classification will continue.

**25. [County Directors] Miscellaneous:** *What happens to a County Social Service Director who isn't the Zone Director?*

There is an effort underway to define the role/expectations of the Interim Zone Director, which will involve being the administrative focus during the process of plan development, and the county directors will largely continue in their current roles until the plan is adopted and a permanent Zone Director is hired. The zone plan, developed locally, will define roles for all of the staff within the zone. So the "other directors" positions will be largely defined locally, in coordination with the pilot projects and the shifting of specific staff to state employment as well reviewing for appropriate assignment and classification.

**26. [General] Salaries:** *If a county employee (transitioning to state employment) is at the maximum for their pay scale, can they still get the up to 2% salary increase approved by state lawmakers the first year of the new biennium?*

It depends on when the county grants the increase, and if they are maxed at the time. The maximum pay scale increases.

**27. [General] Miscellaneous:** *What is going to happen to the administrative support jobs involving bookkeeping, budgets and other administrative support functions in non-host counties? With centralized call centers and zones serving as administrative hubs, at those positions in non-host counties being eliminated and/or absorbed?*

The creation of zones will change the administrative structure of the state's social service system – sharing administrative resources where appropriate to reduce administrative costs and shift more funding to direct client services. Once zones are finalized and implemented (effective Jan. 1, 2020), many administrative functions will be centralized through the host-county of each zone. Zone Directors and zone boards will be reviewing the added workload assumed by host counties to determine the resources needed to serve their zone.

As North Dakota moves to this more collaborative service delivery model, where employees work and provide services to clients is no longer going to be limited by county lines. As stated previously, "Every current classified county social services employee will be offered a position in the zone or with the state. Positions offered to employees in the zone or with the state would be similar in job duties to current roles." There will be opportunities.

**28. [General] Miscellaneous:** Do individuals become an employee of the host county or the zone?

Human Service Zone team members are employees of the host county. The definition of “host county” is “the county within the human service zone in which the human service zone administrative office is located and in which the human service zone team members are employed.”