

History

Known as the "welfare agency" since its beginning in the mid-1800s when the first state hospital opened in St. Peter, Minnesota, the department's focus always has been on helping people make transitions and overcome obstacles in their lives.

In 1868, the department began working with Minnesota's county employees to create what is now the state's county-based social services system. Today, employees in the department's central office in St. Paul work closely with employees from Minnesota's 87 counties who provide most of the direct services to Minnesotans.

Since the late 1800s, DHS has always served Minnesotans in need. From its beginning as the state Board of Correction and Charities in 1883, which evolved into the state Board of Control in 1901, the Minnesota Department of Social Security in 1939, the Department of Public Welfare in 1953, and finally to the Department of Human Services in 1983, it is here to help people make transitions in their lives and live as independently as possible.