



# Media Release

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Contact:

**Amy Webb, Director of Communications  
(501) 682-8650**

**For Immediate Release**

July 29, 2013

## **Steele Tapped to Serve as Division of Youth Services Director**

The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) has chosen Tracy Steele, who has years of experience working on behalf of children, as the new Director of the Division of Youth Services (DYS).

As the former chair of both the Senate and House committees that oversee DHS activities, Steele is familiar with DHS's mission as well as the challenges and successes the division has had over the years. In addition to his legislative experience, he has led the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission and The STAND Foundation, each of which has a focus on serving underprivileged youth.

DYS oversees a system of programs, both community and facility-based, designed to address the needs of youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system. It is responsible for eight facilities and contracts with a number of community programs across the state.

"Tracy's familiarity with DHS and his passion for working with Arkansas youth make him a great fit for the director position," said DHS Director John Selig. "He also has the support of the provider community and the ability to work with legislators from both sides of the aisle, which will be needed as we continue our work to improve the juvenile justice system."

Selig said Steele's extensive leadership experience and knowledge of state government also played a role in his selection. Steele began his career with the state in 1987 coordinating then Gov. Bill Clinton's rural development program. He worked for Clinton and later Gov. Jim Guy Tucker until 1994 when he became the executive director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Commission. Steele left after more than a decade at the helm of the Commission to serve as the chief executive officer of The STAND Foundation.

Steele earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science degree from Rice University in 1985. He also completed Duke University's Strategic Leadership for State Executives training in 1995, which focuses on a broad range of needed management skills.

"I am thankful for this opportunity to carry on the work that has been done to make this division a nationally-recognized juvenile justice program," Steele said. "I will bring an unwavering degree of dedication to support our young people and the families this division serves."

Steele will start his new role on Aug. 5.