

I. Introduction

Background and Purpose

Strategic planning is a process that is used to identify priorities that will guide the agency in using its financial and human resources in providing services in the most advantageous methods to have the greatest impact on both its customers as well as the community. This plan will be effective for the next five years.

This document will also reaffirm CDP's mission, vision and value statements. It will be the basis for the board and staff to work within as services are provided assuring communication between both groups. The strategic plan makes both groups accountable that the services provided fit within the mission of the agency. It is a framework for communication between both groups.

Accountability

The plan will follow the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) concept. The three major areas to be addressed will be Family and Individuals, Community and Agency Capacity and Partnerships. Goals will be addressed with strategies that the board and staff will use in each area. Staff will align the plan's program and administrative strategies, to the extent possible, with the Community Service Block Grant work plan, so that regulatory reporting and internal reporting will not require an unreasonable duplication of effort.

Planning Activities

The Community Needs Assessment was completed over the summer of 2017. Prior to that, a questionnaire that was developed by NYSCAA was used online to gather information on the needs in St Lawrence County. The questionnaires and links were distributed to staff, board members, CDP partners in the community, the public with an emphasis on the low-income sector. Head Start families along with customers at our Neighborhood Centers participated as well. The results were tallied electronically through Gizmo. The Community Needs Assessment Tool which is produced by NYSCAA was also utilized to collect demographics of the county.

Interviews were done with one of CDP's partners as well as a customer. Two community groups met and held discussions on the needs in the county. Those who attended were clergy, elected officials, staff, program participants and community members.

The following are the greatest needs that emerged as a result of the Community Needs Assessment:

1. In the area of transportation there is the lack of a comprehensive public transportation system along with challenges of personal transportation.

2. The need for safe, affordable housing and the increased cost of utilities, making housing costs a burden.
3. There is a need for job opportunities in the county, better wages and to a lesser extent, the need for greater job skills.
4. There is a need for more medical providers especially those who accept Medicaid. This includes medical, dental and mental health providers. The number of people suffering from mental health and substance abuse issues is growing. There are limited services for young children who need mental health services.
5. There is still food insecurity for many in the county.
6. There is a need for quality child care especially for non-traditional hours.

ROMA Planning Cycle

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis was done by the strategic planning group. The results of that analysis that were identified were:

Strengths

Excellent staff/many with longevity
CDP viewed in a positive manner in the community/with funders
Quality programs as a foundation who receive regular training
Programs do a good job with the funds they have available

Weaknesses

Low pay scale resulting in staff turnover
Difficulty finding employees who meet the qualifications needed when pay is low
Very large service area
Perception that CDP is part of the County

Opportunities

Availability of funds for Head Start full day programming
Agencies in the community that are willing to partner/collaborate
Many training opportunities available

Threats

Possibility of funding cuts
Increased competition for grants/some duplication of services (food pantries)

Development of Strategic Goals

The strategic planning group made up of board members, staff and customers reviewed and discussed the ROMA planning cycle along with the new ROMA Goals and the Organizational Standards that deal with Strategic Planning. As in the past, the agency goals will be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary.

New ROMA Goals

There are fewer new ROMA goals than previously were used but they do encompass the previous six ROMA goals that were used.

Goal 1: Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.

Goal 2: Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.

Goal 3: People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.

Organizational Standards that Relate to Strategic Planning

Standard 6.1 : The organization has an agency-wide Strategic Plan in Place that has been approved by the governing board within the past 5 years.

Standard 6.2 : The approved Strategic Plan addresses reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities, and/or empowerment of people with low incomes to become more self-sufficient.

Standard 6.3 : The approved Strategic Plan contains Family, Agency and/or Community goals.

Standard 6.4 : Customer satisfaction data and customer input, collected as part of the Community Assessment, is included in the strategic planning process.

Standard 6.5 : The governing board has received an update(s) on meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan within the past 12 months.

II. Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

St. Lawrence County Community Development Program is committed to encourage and assist individuals and families to attain self-reliance, dignity and self-sufficiency through education, guidance and services.

Vision

CDP strives to be a community organization that is focused on delivering services that meet the changing needs of the low-income families in St. Lawrence County. This is accomplished with respect and caring through collaborative efforts with other agencies.

Values

The values that govern St. Lawrence County Community Development Program include the following:

- Quality customer service for all program participants and potential participants.
- A work environment which fosters creativity and promotes the exploration of innovative ideas.
- Adherence to best practices in every aspect of the organization.

Strategic Goals

1. Focus on self- sufficiency for the families CDP serves with an emphasis on empowerment.

Objective: Engage customers in seeking employment and /or training/education.

Objective: Offer volunteer experiences to program participants in order to improve or develop job skills leading to employment.

Objective : Increase financial stability of program families through budgeting workshops which include working with families on the use of tax return dollars especially those utilizing the VITA program.

Objective : Empower families to advocate for themselves in the appropriate manner.

2. Strengthen the perception of CDP and the services that CDP provides in the community in its effort to combat poverty in St. Lawrence County.

Objective: Increase public relations through newspaper articles, Facebook page, website and interviews for local radio and TV stations.

Objective: Increase visibility by speaking about CDP and its programs to other agencies, community groups, service organizations including networking groups. Attend

community gatherings/functions where information about CDP can be disseminated to the public.

3. Enhance existing partnerships and collaborations that strengthen existing services which will increase resources that improve conditions for low-income families and communities.

Objective : Lead community groups to improve medical, dental and mental health services for families who have low incomes.

Objective : Network with the community in order to receive food and monetary donations to provide adequate nutrition to families with low incomes.

Objective : Strengthen our network by providing current program information to community agencies.

4. Strengthen CDP services and improve family outcomes through education.

Objective : Engage families in receiving information on budgeting, healthy nutrition and health and safety through workshops and printed information.

Objective: Provide staff, board, clients and volunteers with on-going information/training to assist in performing their duties in delivering quality services to families. This will include orientation to the agency.

Objective : Provide the most current and pertinent information about CDP programs to families.

Objective: Institute extended day programming for all Head Start classrooms.

Objective: Engage HCVP participants in setting goals for their families through Family Self-Sufficiency programming.

Objective : Improve services through feedback obtained from program participant surveys

5. Build the capacity of the agency in order to achieve effective outcomes.

Objective : Maintain funding for existing programs and explore new programs/funding sources.

Objective : Create budgets with Program Directors monitoring costs and cost effectiveness with the assistance of the CFO.

Objective : Upgrade equipment and technology to maintain effective programming. Include the use of CAPTAIN as a database to track program participant activities, referrals,

outcomes and demographics as well as case management.

6. Improve the conditions in which families with low income live.

Objective : HCVP will provide rental assistance to eligible families.

Objective : HomeOwnership will assist families who are eligible in the process of purchasing their first home.

Objective : Weatherization will improve the housing of families with low income and decrease energy costs.

Objective : Secure rehabilitation grants to assist families with emergency repairs and improve the housing stock in the county.

Objective : Assist families with transportation to employment, interviews and medical appointments.