

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
**COMPREHENSIVE BUSINESS PLAN**

**Part 1: *Strategy***

*March 2015 through March 2018*

*Developed by the Strategic Planning Team*  
*Prepared by Strumpf Associates: Center for Strategic Change*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

During the later part of 2014, Albemarle County Department of Social Services developed a new strategic approach for the next three years. The strategy and the plan are designed to provide direction for prioritizing future initiatives, allocating limited resources, and charting a path for growth. The Strategic Plan assists the leadership and the staff in focusing their efforts on services that are relevant to the community, to individuals, and to families.

The Department's Strategic Plan is meant to guide strategic and operational actions of the organization as we seek to address current and future needs of our customers and our community. It sets direction for the organization and the type of service delivery system we seek to develop. It will be used as a guide to help in strategic and operational decision making. However, the strategic plan is not a detailed operational plan, nor does it contain specific budget recommendations. Instead, it presents a vision for the future of the organization and strategies for achieving that future.

### ***Strategic Planning Assumptions that Guided the Discussions***

An analysis of the region's economic and demographic data informed the dialogue during the planning meetings that led to the creation of the strategic priorities captured in this document and helped to frame the following assumptions that drove the discussions:

- Collaborative strategies are needed to reduce/prevent impacts of poverty.
- Communication and community engagement with diverse cultures and populations must increase.
- Expanding caseloads require us to work smarter, more effectively and more efficiently to ensure results.
- Technology maximization will help to make processes (both internal and external) more efficient and should also be used as a tool to expand how we communicate.

### ***Strategic Imperatives Identified***

The analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats led to the identification of strategic imperatives that, if not addressed, may hinder the organization's ability to be positioned to thrive into the future. These imperatives are to:

- Collaborate with community partners to increase capacity.
- Continue to create organizational ability and agility to be responsive to customer expectations.
- Ensure staff has the competencies required to create a quality customer experience.

This plan and set of strategic priorities, goals and strategies are meant to become the methodology for the organization's operations. If it is successful, this process will not have yielded a plan to be placed on the shelf, but will have served as a catalyst for the process of planning strategically at all times and at all levels throughout the organization.

It is our hope that this plan captures the new environment expected to exist in a rapidly evolving world. We will continuously assess our purpose, promote and reward innovation and improvement, foster employee development, and use effective methods and technologies to produce significant positive results and lasting benefits for our community and the customers served by the Department of Social Services in Albemarle County.

## ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

**VISION:** Individuals and families in Albemarle County are able to meet their full potential and plan for the future.

**MISSION:** We provide services that promote self-sufficiency and support individual and family safety and well-being.

**VALUE PROPOSITION:** We listen to your needs and we work with you to find solutions.

**CUSTOMERS:** Our *primary external customers* are individuals and organizations who use our services and those who are in need of services.

Staff are our *internal customers*.

**ROLE:** **The Department will play several roles in furtherance of our vision and mission:**

- We will be an **advocate** for the people we serve.
- We will endeavor to **catalyze change** in the community.
- We will be **stewards** for the safety and security of our customers.
- We will be a **community facilitator and convener**.

**ORGANIZATIONAL  
CORE VALUES**

**Our Common Values:**

We believe in the following shared principles, beliefs and priorities....

**HOPE.** We will work in ways that instill hope by opening doors to opportunity.

**RESPECT.** We share and show esteem, appreciation and acceptance of diversity and treat all individuals with honor and dignity.

**OPPORTUNITY.** We bring to bear all of our talents and resources to provide opportunities for our customers to succeed and thrive.

**SELF DETERMINATION.** We recognize that individuals are responsible for their own development and have the freedom to choose.

## ***STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS***

### ***STRATEGIC PRIORITIES for 2014 thru 2017***

- Improve access to services for all.
- Expand our digital footprint and use technology to improve services.
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of our processes.
- Sustain, enhance and continue to build partnerships.

### ***STRATEGIC GOALS and OBJECTIVES***

The following goals and objectives support the Department in accomplishing the priorities set for the next three years.

***Strategic Goal 1:*** Ensure a quality customer experience for the external customer by continuous focus on process improvement.

#### ***Key Objectives:***

- Develop a system to regularly identify core processes and continuously improve them.
- Define the core products and services of the organization.
- Invigorate methods for seeking, collecting, and analyzing customer inputs, feedback, complaints, etc. including a method to segment the customer data and use for continuous improvement based on customer expectations.
- Expand the methods by which current and potential customers access services (e.g., expand use of technology, expand place-based services to other locations, language access, etc.)
- Market the core products and services to customers and educate them on how to access these services.

***Strategic Goal 2:*** Ensure staff has the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to deliver quality service and to enhance the external customer's experience.

#### ***Key Objectives:***

- Identify and enhance the knowledge, skills and competencies required to provide quality customer service.
- Provide customer service coaching and training.
- Identify and enhance task related (job specific) skills and competencies needed by staff and provide ongoing coaching and training.
- Create and enhance training methods, such as an on line training that staff can access at anytime to improve skills.
- Review staff performance with regard to internal and external customer satisfaction regularly.
- Evaluate staff development opportunities through mechanisms such as surveying supervisors about improvements to staff performance.
- Evaluate and provide feedback on all systems that staff work with to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness with regard to use of time and financial resources.

## ***OPERATING PRINCIPLES***

**The following principles define the way the organization operates with regard to the goals and strategies identified. The core processes employed by the organization to accomplish the goals will operate in the following fashion.**

- We collaborate to build strategic alliances around our goals, strategies and tasks in which we are engaged.
- We align and maximize all resources required to carry out our strategic initiatives and seek to increase our resources as required to achieve our mission.
- We continuously ensure our strategies meet changing needs and expectations of our customers and the marketplace.
- We deliver service excellence through all our products, processes and services.
- We develop strategies embedded in research and best practice information to become a knowledge-rich learning organization.
- We use Continuous Quality Process Improvement strategies to ensure our strategies meet changing expectations of our customers and the market place.
- We use the CQI principle of data-driven decision-making in the operational end of all systems and processes.
- We conduct ongoing evaluation to continuously assess the outcomes and appropriateness of programs and delivery systems for which we will hold ourselves accountable.
- We continuously strengthen organizational effectiveness and build capacity.
- We embrace and strive to meet the County's One Organization philosophy.

## ***DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN***

- Increase and sustain customer satisfaction at 95%
- Improve up to 3 core processes by making them leaner based on specified criteria
- Expand the number of access points/place based services by at least 2
- Increase the number of online applications by 50%
  - Baseline is the number of on line applications currently received
- Face to face requests for translation are met at least 98% of the time.
- Accuracy and timeliness in x, y and z core processes improves by X%
- Supervisors report that at least 75% of the staff that received training has improved job performance related to the training received.
  - Measured by a survey at 3 and 6 months.
- Staff who participated in training report that they have better job performance related to the training they received at least 75% of the time.
  - Measured by a survey at 3 and 6 months

## **Logic Model For the Strategy**

**Theory of Change:** Giving people an experience of positive regard, accurate information, opportunity and support will create the environment for them to make positive choices and improvements in their lives for themselves and their families. .

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Interim Outcomes</b>	<b>Outcomes (critical metrics)</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Strategy	Deliver individualized services for individuals and families	Diverse set of participants are served with wide range of levels of ability and need.	The number of joint initiatives with partners increases.	Increase and sustain customer satisfaction at 95%.	Raise individual incomes and provide stability to families.
Case workers with smaller (than the average) caseloads	Provide opportunities for customers to demonstrate success	Receive support services, as needed	Staff reports more efficiency in doing their job thru technology improvements.	Improve up to 3 core processes by making them leaner based on specified criteria	Sustain the capacity to serve a wide range of individuals and families with varying levels of ability and needs.
Experienced program staff	Provide access to financial resources thru the benefits and eligibility determination process	Receive financial and medical assistance as needed.	Number of staff participating in professional development opportunities increases.	Expand the number of access points/place based services by at least 2	DSS can be found on line in multiple ways by customers.
Grant funds and resources	Provide access to medical resources thru the benefits and eligibility determination process	Complete education and/or employment services	Number of external customers from underserved areas receiving benefits increases.	Increase the number of online applications by 50%	Technology is used regularly as a method to improve service management and delivery.
Equipment materials and supplies	Screen and validate reports received on child, family, and elder safety concerns	Number of hits on social media sites increases.	Opportunities for improvements are identified and initial implementation completed on 3 core processes.	Meet between 98 to 100% of face to face requests for translation	Processes are efficient and effective for internal and external customers.
Infrastructure	Investigate allegations of child or elder abuse and perform risk assessment	Number of forms downloaded from sites increases.		Improve accuracy/timeliness in x, y and z core processes by X% (processes and metrics TBD by PIMT)	Partnerships have expanded.
Partners	Provide safe residential settings for children, youth and elders who may be removed from current living situations.	Capacity to provide translation services increases.		Supervisors report that at least 75% of the staff that received training had improved on the job performance (method – survey at 3 and 6 months)	
	Provide services to achieve school readiness			75% of staff who participated in training report that they perform better on the job at 3 and 6 months	
	Prevention activities along a spectrum related to				

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risky behaviors.

Provide individual  
and group  
workforce services.

Provide information  
to customers  
regularly thru the  
DSS social media  
sites.

Create joint  
initiatives among  
selected partners  
that support  
overlapping  
missions and  
needs.

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