

**Child &
Family
Services**



of Northwestern Michigan

July 2025

Strategic Plan Update

Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to ensure the safety and well-being of those we serve in times of crisis, challenge, and life transition.

Vision

Create resilient, strengths-based communities where people of all ages are safe, healthy, and thriving.

Core Values *(Mission and Vision in action)*

Respect

We will treat all stakeholders—clients, volunteers, staff, referral sources, and all members of our community—with compassion and dignity.

Innovation

We will respond to client and community needs with forward-thinking, trauma-informed, and evidence-based best practices in education and programming.

Service

We will serve by providing high-quality, efficient, and versatile training and programs for the greatest benefit of all stakeholders in a clean, inviting environment.

Excellence

We will conduct ourselves with the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and fiscal responsibility.

Stability

We will work together consistently to maintain a stable organization to accomplish our mission.

Sustainability

We are committed to environmental responsibility and to protecting the world in which we and our stakeholders live.

Goals + Strategies

S

Satisfied, Supported People

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Professional, Compassionate
Programs + Services

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Infrastructure Planning +
Facilities Management

F

Fiscal Stability + Sustainability

Goal 1: Satisfied, Supported People

Communication

- ◆ Update marketing/communications plan (within Development Strategic Plan for FY25)
- ◆ Develop consistent messaging for board/staff (elevator speech planned for Board training at Jan Retreat; for staff aiming for in person in September 2025)
- ◆ Develop crisis management communication plan (aka Business Continuity Plan, in addition to emergency phone tree instituted new this year)
- ◆ Increase mentoring, training, and supervision to enhance communication skills with clients, foster parents, and each other (this is a priority from staff survey; emphasis on conflict resolution, de-escalation skills, foster parent/staff trauma-informed parenting skills in FY25)

Goal 1: Satisfied, Supported People

Communication (continued)

- ◆ Create an internal communications plan (annualize staff survey; regular All Staff, Admin, RT meetings, changed flow of these meetings; many ways of communicating, ongoing, enhancing regular Things to Know This Week emails; adding Outlook invitations for All Staff or specific staff notifications via Outlook; currently updating internal communications plan)
- ◆ Communicate programs to community (ongoing, mixture of print/digital in all markets; LEO grant provides additional \$\$)
- ◆ Increase advocacy efforts with government officials and agencies (RT will include 15 minutes of each strategic meeting monthly to write letters to electeds; continuing via Federation and management-level efforts with individual legislators)

Goal 1: Satisfied, Supported People

Succession Planning

- ◆ Review and update agency succession plan
- ◆ Review and update transition plan for key management positions
- ◆ Create professional development plan for leaders (not just rising leaders but current leaders as well, training goals in each annual Director evaluation; using Admin Team meetings to provide short training + info videos/readings to improve skills/provide supervision tools; offering regular leadership training)

Goal 1: Satisfied, Supported People

Recruitment + Retention

- ◆ Develop employee recruitment and retention plan (Ad Hoc Wage/Benefit Committee needs to be implemented to consider strategies, including goal of reviving retirement benefit)
- ◆ Support employee training/professional development and assure their preparedness for new positions (33K spent on training in FY25, funded primarily through grants)
- ◆ Right-sizing program + admin staff and workloads to prevent burnout (ongoing; turnover so far in 2025 is 9; in FY24 was 29; 34 in FY23)

Goal 1: Satisfied, Supported People

General HR Review

- ◆ Review all job descriptions for clarity and consistency
- ◆ Continue to refine onboarding process as key to retention/job satisfaction
- ◆ Continue to review and implement appropriate wage increases and benefits

Goal 2: Professional, Compassionate Programs + Services

General

- ◆ Understand and promote inter-connectedness across all CFS programs/systems, including housing/weatherization, transportation, childcare, mental/behavioral health, substance abuse (e.g., YW and Youth Services; LEO helping us do this.)
- ◆ Assist with revival of Grand Traverse Human Services Collaborative Body or similar to help evaluate and prepare for changes coming resulting from federal and state cuts in services (CFS is involved with many collaborative efforts including QRT for City; Human Services Collaboratives in Leelanau/Benzie/Wexford Missaukee Counties; Coalition to End Homelessness; Mental Health Access Center Advisory Committee; BHS CHIR effort; philanthropy focus groups; Federation advocacy)

Goal 2: Professional, Compassionate Programs + Services

General (continued)

- ◆ Enhanced communication across all programs and people, regularly reminding all of vehicles at their disposal, including TTKTW, meeting minutes, eblasts, website, supervisors as fonts of information, follow social media posts
- ◆ Strategic program implementation of goals and evaluation (talk through program goals in each monthly RT strategic plan meeting)

Goal 2: Professional, Compassionate Programs + Services

Behavioral Health

- ◆ Build Safe Haven North program to full utilization in line with resources (capacity varies based on staffing; playground being built on Harbor grounds for SHN use)
- ◆ Advocate for revival of the TC Crime Victims Partners' Group led by Prosecutor's Office (ongoing; court referrals for therapeutic visits are coming and are very needed but no \$\$ to support them and need to find staff)
- ◆ Prepare for PIHP changes and other changes such as loss of Medicaid; develop response
- ◆ Participate in community mental health access efforts + advocacy on Medicaid rates and related issues (24/7 access to Crisis Mental Health Center at Munson began July 7, with pediatric crisis beds expected Fall 2025; rates have increased (\$35-55/unit previously to about \$100/unit with lots of lobbying and advocacy)

Goal 2: Professional, Compassionate Programs + Services

Third Level Youth Services

- ◆ Recruit and license 2 Host Homes for runaway/homeless youth aged 12-17 (3 unlicensed homes provide 5 beds per federal contract, up 1 unlicensed home and 1 bed since 1/25)
- ◆ Increase clients by 25% of last FY's numbers (at about 19.5% increase across 4 programs for the year)
- ◆ Implement FLAC survey with 25% rate of return (survey is at about 15% rate of return)
- ◆ New Char/Em contract: explore need in service area with at least 10 groups in Year 1 (meaningful conversations with 7 groups so far; moving forward with a potential hire for position there)

Goal 2: Professional, Compassionate Programs + Services

Development

- ◆ Expand Donor Base in Harbor Springs
- ◆ Institutionalize CFS Impact & Honors Night as a Cornerstone of Staff Engagement
- ◆ Deepen Strategic Relationships with Financial Advisors

Goal 2: Professional, Compassionate Programs + Services

Child Welfare

- ◆ Next Level Program at healthy capacity (more marketing by program supervisor in next 6 months--2 youth in; 1 in the hopper; adding 1 FC worker to staff ILP; other learning trial and error has shaped changes in intake process; 4 hours of independent living skills work/week)
- ◆ Fully utilize respite contract with all counties in service area (growing; last year provided 225 total respite nights, this year at 225 with 3 months of FY to go)
- ◆ Explore avenues for funding to maintain Family Time Coaching after the conclusion of the MHEF grant (unused funds from current year are available to us in Year 3; FTC team to deliver Ted Talk at Fed conference, where DHHS staff will be in attendance; data in development)

Goal 2: Professional, Compassionate Programs + Services

Child Welfare (continued)

- ◆ Explore other income streams for Respite (courts, et al.) and advocate for policy change, provide respite for children with CPS cases but not yet in foster care and kids in CCLs
- ◆ Continue to stabilize current programs by strengthening and nurturing staff to avoid burnout and seeking efficiencies and opportunities for improvement

Goal 2: Professional, Compassionate Programs + Services

YouthWork

- ◆ Continue to implement Conservation work via stable crews, partnership with National Park Service and other partners, and develop fee for service side of program
- ◆ Successfully implement Weatherization program within 5-county region with first crew in 2025 season; second crew after 3-4 months of fully understanding costs and labor needed for various projects; potential expansion beyond region to Detroit area and Upper Peninsula
- ◆ Complete planning, fundraising, and building of new structure at Cedar Run with classrooms, offices, and amenities (Special Use Permit application submitted to Garfield Township July 1)
- ◆ Build fee for service agriculture and GoatWork projects

Goal 2: Professional, Compassionate Programs + Services

Access for All

- ◆ Increase internal efforts to train and accommodate all staff for increased job performance and satisfaction
- ◆ Enhance robust recruitment efforts across programs, including with GT Band and other tribes
- ◆ Increase staff and board skill sets to better represent community populations and to enhance job performance
- ◆ Continue to improve website with simpler design/content to increase ease of use for many populations

Goal 3: Infrastructure Planning + Facilities Management

Information Technology

- ◆ Fundraising: IT continues to be a big focus of grant writing given cybersecurity needs, though not all funders are willing to pay for it; raised 22K so far in FY25 (30K raised in FY24, up from 22K previous year)
- ◆ Improve data collection and reporting systems/KPI information for all programs (ongoing; implementation of Martus budget module for Accounting + Directors is in process)
- ◆ Education on IT tools (available + ongoing)
- ◆ E-tracking of all tech and tool assets: Asset Panda purchased for this purpose (in implementation phase now)
- ◆ Increased Cybersecurity (improved breach protocols and policies, but a constant source of worry and attention)

Goal 3: Infrastructure Planning + Facilities Management

Facilities Improvement

- ◆ Maintain Cedar Run and Veterans physical plants for maximum efficiency and usage by staff (employees at both locations encouraged to email Building Management team to report needed repairs or concerns)
- ◆ Identify opportunities for green and general improvements at all locations (playgrounds in process at Veterans and Harbor Springs after successful fundraising campaigns; exploring solar heat pump at Cedar Run and general solar at Veterans)

Goal 4: Fiscal Stability + Sustainability

General

- ◆ Improve level of communication to Admin team on monthly and annual/audit results, funding streams, general financial policy
- ◆ Annual risk management review (done in CQI, due in August for CARF)
- ◆ Right-size staffing (new AR specialist is trained and in place; HR still needs some level of staffing help)
- ◆ Additional accounting training for staff to offset increased capacity

Goal 4: Fiscal Stability + Sustainability

Budget

- ◆ Maintain a net zero budget (ongoing)
- ◆ Build and maintain 6-month operating reserve (2 months as of 7/25)
- ◆ Cash reserve strategy (new ICS accounts will gain 4-5% interest, and all FDIC-insured)
- ◆ Create an Endowment account as an option for donors (founding/policy documents needed) seeded with Forster legacy gift (in process; proposals being reviewed currently)
- ◆ Right-size programs (continuous evaluation + review in view of fed/state changes)
- ◆ Increase fundraising (at 1.1M as of 7/8/25; FY25 goal is 1.476M)

Goal 4: Fiscal Stability + Sustainability

Budget (continued)

- ◆ Increase staff compensation (ongoing; raises across programs and year-end profit-sharing bonuses; new goal to bring back 5% retirement benefit)
- ◆ Long-term financial strategic plan (ongoing; part of Martus implementation and includes more robust multi-year budgeting)
- ◆ Continue to improve grants management process (loss of several grants in first half of FY25 will obviously streamline this process, making private philanthropy more important. Staff Grants Committee meets monthly with input across programs)