

**MID FLORIDA COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2021 – 2023**

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COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.**



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## Introduction

Mid Florida Community Services, Inc., is a Community Action Agency serving Hernando, Sumter, Pasco, Lake, Citrus, Polk, and Volusia Counties with headquarters located in Hernando County. Established in 1968, Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. (MFCS), has been dedicated to eliminating the causes of poverty and promoting self-sufficiency through a comprehensive service delivery approach for over 50 years.



The **Mission** of MFCS is: To strengthen partnerships, mobilize resources, and provide integrated services that promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families in the communities in which they live.

To that end, we **envision** our community working together to reduce poverty. Individuals and families are empowered; strengthened; have sufficient money for food and housing; and, they can meet their own needs by utilizing their talents, potential, and passions. All sectors within the communities we serve are engaged, including low-income populations, and play an active role in reducing poverty and helping low-income individuals and families become fully self-sufficient. We are a leader, advocate, and voice for low-income individuals and families.

## History of Community Action

Community Action is a multidimensional approach to addressing self-sufficiency. Developed as part of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act and President Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty”, the purpose of Community Action was to fight poverty by making communities more responsive to the needs and interests of the poor by mobilizing resources and bringing about a greater institutional sensitivity. The 1964 Economic Opportunity Act created the Office of Economic Opportunity led by Sargent Shriver, who was the driving force behind legislation that focused on anti-poverty programs and the creation of Community Action Agencies.

While the strategic approach to eliminating poverty has changed course since the inception of the Community Action concept, the Mission remains the same. The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program serves as the cornerstone of Community Action, and the legislated national performance goals are used as a framework to develop and monitor performance outcomes on the life-changing services and opportunities that are being offered to the communities we serve.

**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.

Community Action challenges stakeholders to create solutions that don't just help people stay afloat, but build lives of stability, dignity, and, whenever possible, prosperity.

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live.

## **Agency Profile**

MFCS is a robust local force reaching children, seniors, individuals, and families with life-changing services that create pathways to opportunity and prosperity. MFCS utilizes a multidimensional approach to addressing self-sufficiency, such as:

**-Connecting individuals and families to approaches that help them succeed** – including high quality education programs for children, utility assistance for seniors, and so much more.

**-Promoting community-wide solutions** to seemingly stubborn challenges – whether it is the lack of transportation for the transportation disadvantaged, or helping individuals secure employment at a livable wage.

**-Sharing expertise** with national, state, and local leaders looking for evidence on what works to promote greater economic opportunity for children, seniors, individuals, and families.

Today, MFCS operates eight programs across a vast service area that spans from the west coast to the east coast of Florida, totaling over 7,500 square miles.

- **Children's Advocacy Center of Hernando County:** This program provides a child-friendly facility that responds to children who are victims of sexual abuse, physical abuse, threatened harm, drug-endangerment, mental injury, neglect, and/or witnesses of domestic violence. They utilize a nationally-recognized multidisciplinary team approach.
- **Family Self-Sufficiency Program:** The Family Self-Sufficiency Program works to eliminate the barriers that prevent low-income people from moving from poverty to self-sufficiency. The program assists highly-motivated individuals seeking new career opportunities to gain the education and job skills needed to secure employment at a sustainable living wage.
- **Head Start/Early Head Start:** This program is a federally-funded preschool program that promotes the school readiness of low-income children ages birth to 5 years of age by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development.
- **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program:** The goal of this program is to prevent interruption of electric and gas service for low-income households,

particularly those living with children under five years of age, seniors, and disabled individuals.

- **Emergency Home Energy Assistance for the Elderly Program:** This program is designed to assist and prevent interruption of electric and gas service for low-income households with at least one member aged 60 or older experiencing a heating or cooling emergency.
- **Emergency/Support Services:** Assistance is available to low-income individuals and families facing a crisis situation due to an unexpected circumstance that negatively impacted the family's financial stability.
- **Senior Services:** Programs offer a wide array of services designed to support aging seniors in their efforts to live independently in their own homes, improving their ability to function, and avoiding costly placement in long term care facilities.
- **Transportation Services:** This program is Hernando County's designated Community Transportation Coordinator providing safe, efficient, cost effective and quality transportation services for transportation disadvantaged citizens of Hernando County.
- **Weatherization Assistance Program:** The goal of this program is to reduce energy costs for low-income families, particularly the elderly, disabled and those with children under age 12, by improving the energy efficiency of their homes while ensuring their health and safety.

### **Purpose of the Strategic Plan**

The MFCS Strategic Plan sets the Agency's broad goals that guide agency programs and operations to meet the needs of low-income individuals, families, and communities throughout the MFCS service area.

MFCS' 2021 Community Needs Assessment was conducted during February through June 2021, in collaboration with MFCS staff, MFCS clients, MFCS Governing Board members, the community-at-large, and key informants and community partners (community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private and public sectors, and educational institutions).

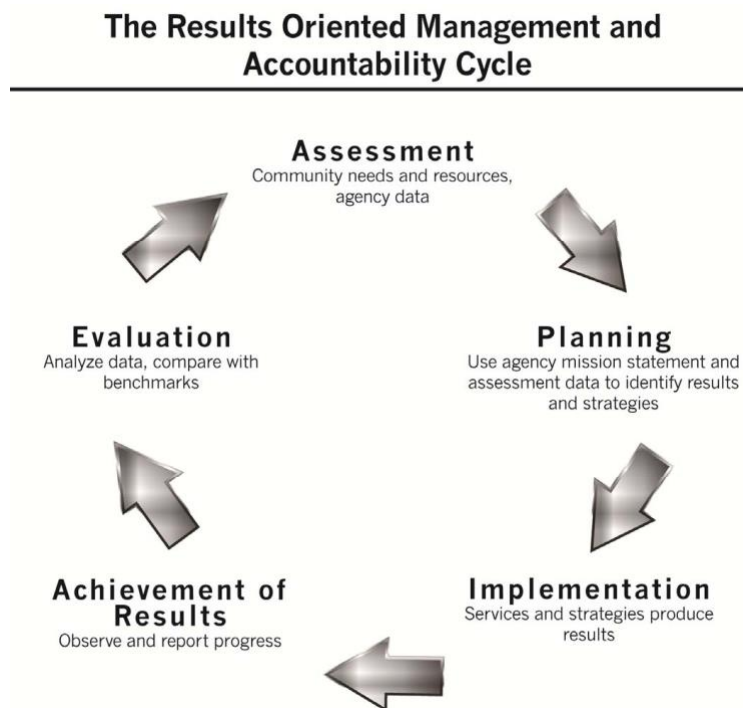
Through the Community Needs Assessment process, five needs emerged as the most critical for the MFCS service area:

1. Affordable housing
2. Basic needs/crisis prevention
3. Food insecurity
4. Transportation
5. Communication and outreach regarding community resources

As a result of the Community Needs Assessment, MFCS developed recommendations in response to the needs that emerged through the process.

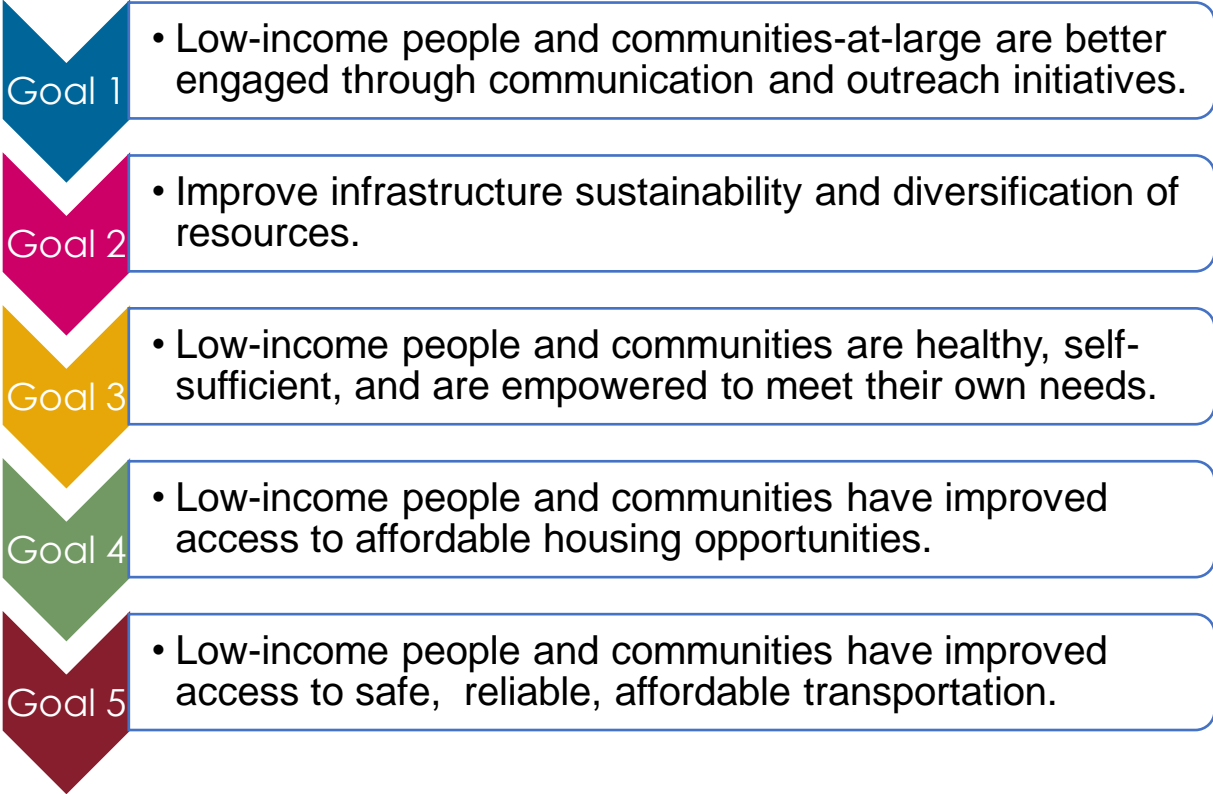
The information gathered through the Community Needs Assessment process, as well as customer satisfaction data and feedback collected from MFCS clients, was used to inform the development of this Strategic Plan.

The Results Oriented Management and Accountability Model, as depicted below, is a performance management tool utilized by Community Action Agencies throughout the network. Through both the Community Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan processes, MFCS utilized the remaining phases of the cycle – planning, implementation, observe the achievement of results, and evaluation to strengthen, adapt, and/or adjust service delivery – in an effort to not only address the top five emerging needs identified, but also to guide MFCS in decisions relating to services and service delivery strategies, prioritization of resources allocated to services, and to create opportunities to maximize resources and funding to address issues and concerns being experienced locally, especially pertaining to vulnerable populations.



The ROMA Cycle graphic was developed by the National Peer to Peer (NPIP) ROMA Training Project, based on guidance regarding Core Activities for States and CSBG Eligible Entities provided by OCS Information Memo 49. From Planning for Results © 2006, J. Jakopic and B. Mooney, Community Action Association of PA. Curriculum developed with funding from the US Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Community. Use is permitted with this footer. All other rights reserved.

**Strategic Plan At-A-Glance**



## Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

### Community

Goal 1: Low-income people and communities-at-large are better engaged through communication and outreach initiatives.

Objective 1.1: Promote greater organizational visibility through enhanced communication activities.

Objective 1.2: Strengthen Agency's partnership resource plan.

Objective 1.3: Increase participation in community conversations regarding needs and concerns of low-income people.

### Agency

Goal 2: Improve infrastructure sustainability and diversification of resources.

Objective 2.1: Evaluate and strengthen Agency's brand effectiveness.

Objective 2.2: Identify and pursue additional funding opportunities, including the establishment of a donor base.

Objective 2.3: Strengthen and expand volunteer program.

Objective 2.4: Establish Agency compliance, safety, and risk mitigation best practices.

Objective 2.5: Explore technological enhancements to improve overall Agency efficiency and effectiveness.

### Family

Goal 3: Low-income people and communities are healthy, self-sufficient, and are empowered to meet their own needs.

Objective 3.1: Increase access to nutritious food through expansion of food programs.

Objective 3.2: Explore new and creative health and wellness initiatives that increase access and reduce cost for low-income people.

Objective 3.3: Evaluate and improve CSBG/LIHEAP program best practices to maximize self-sufficiency outcomes.

Objective 3.4: Increase Agency's ability to utilize agency resources and inter-departmental collaboration to meet client needs.

### Family

Goal 4: Low-income people and communities have improved access to affordable housing opportunities.

Objective 4.1: Increase participation in community conversations regarding affordable housing needs and concerns of low-income people.

Objective 4.2: Expand Agency's ability to provide low-income people with a continuum of coordinated services to meet their housing needs.

### Family

Goal 5: Low-income people and communities have improved access to safe, reliable, affordable transportation.

Objective 5.1: Seek additional funding opportunities to enhance/expand MFCS' transportation disadvantaged program in Hernando County.

Objective 5.2: Explore the feasibility of establishing a Vehicle Donation Program for MFCS clients.