



Strategic Plan 2019-2021

Mid Florida Community Services, Inc



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Mid Florida Community Services, Inc.

Vision



Vision

Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. envisions our community working together to reduce poverty. Individuals and families are empowered, strengthened, have sufficient money for food and housing; 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. Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. is a leader, advocate, and voice for low-income individuals and families.

Mission



Mission

Mid Florida Community Services, Inc.'s mission 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.

Core Values



Core Values

Sensitivity – Being compassionate and non-judgmental toward all people. Being respectful of differences in culture, gender, age, and ability.

Teamwork – United through the vision and mission of the agency to achieve common goals. Our team is characterized by mutual respect, individual responsibilities, open and honest communications and support for one another.

Organizational and Professional Growth – Continually seeking opportunities to enhance and expand the organization's capacity to provide services. The agency values individual professional growth through financial support and encouragement for training and individualized career development and progress.

Partnership – Working in collaboration with others to enhance and improve services, reduce duplication, share information and leverage resources.

Excellence – A dedicated and highly professional staff committed to providing the highest quality service to the community.

Accountability – Achievement of goals measured with performance outcomes and accomplished through strong fiscal controls, effective program management, and individual responsibility.

Integrity – Evidenced through decisions and actions of the organization and individuals that are true to the Vision and Mission of the agency. Individual behaviors are characterized by honesty, trust, respect, worthiness, and professionalism.



Executive Summary

Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Community Action agency dedicated to eliminating the causes of poverty through a comprehensive service delivery approach. The agency currently operates in Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Pasco, Polk, Sumter and Volusia counties, and employs over 325 staff members with an annual operating budget of approximately \$30 million. Ongoing funding and resources are primarily obtained from “pass-through” grants that originate at the federal and state levels. The agency also heavily relies on local donors, partners, in-kind contributions, fundraising activities, and volunteer support as key strategies for long-term sustainability.

Through a variety of programs and in collaboration with other community service organizations, Mid Florida Community Services, Inc.(MFCS) serves low-income and vulnerable individuals and families. MFCS assists its customers/clients in pursuing educational goals, securing and retaining employment, maintaining adequate and safe housing, receiving medical services, obtaining food to meet nutritional needs to counteract hunger and malnutrition, procuring child care and early/preschool education for their children, receiving energy subsidies and weatherization assistance, and developing other personal and family opportunities to build and achieve self-sufficiency.

Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. has prepared this strategic plan to effectively guide the agency’s course of action for Mission obtainment and achieving full potential through our focused goals, and objectives.

Agency’s History

Established in 1968, the Hernando County Community Action Agency began in Brooksville, Florida as a result of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 in support of Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty” and vision for a “Great Society.” The Agency employed only three (3) staff members at their start, and its primary focus was to evaluate and implement solutions to fight poverty through a myriad of strategies which included community education and outreach efforts.

Several executive directors led the charge for the Agency’s first ten (10) years until the current Chief Executive Officer, Michael J. Georgini, was appointed in 1978. That same year the Hernando Community Action Agency changed its name to Hernando/Sumter Community Action Agency due to its expansion of services into Sumter County, and the Agency established a Head Start program. Today, the Agency provides programs and services to seven (7) Central Florida counties, and its Head Start program remains and is the Agency’s largest program to date. As the Agency expand, the name changed to Mid Florida Community Services, Inc.

The Agency has aggressively expanded under Georgini’s leadership. They continued to acquire and develop new programs and services to assist low-income and vulnerable populations in their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency. The seven (7) county Agency covers more than 7,500 square miles, employs over 325 staff members and oversees an annual operating budget of just under \$30 million.

Agency’s Programs

Mid Florida Community Services, Inc.’s programs are focused on improving the living conditions of low-income individuals and families that will enable the transition from poverty to self-sufficient, including employment, housing, health care/nutrition, education, and transportation.



We serve low-income and vulnerable individuals, families, and communities that are in need through the following structured programs and services:

Family Self-Sufficiency Program	The Family Self-Sufficiency Program assists low-income individuals who need additional education or job skills training with securing employment at a living wage.
Energy Assistance	The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) assists eligible households who are at 150% or less of the Federal Poverty Guidelines with paying energy/gas bills to prevent service interruption.
Emergency/Support Services	Emergency/Support Services assistance is available to low-income households who are at 125% or less of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.
Early Head Start and Head Start	Head Start 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.
Senior Services	Senior Services Department provides a variety of services designed to help Seniors live a healthy, independent lifestyle and avoid placement in assisted living facilities.
Transportation	This program is the designated Community Transportation Coordinator program for the disadvantaged.
Children’s Advocacy Center of Hernando	The Children's Advocacy Center provides a child-friendly environment while assisting victims of child abuse, coordinating response through/with law enforcement, legal, and counseling professionals.
Weatherization Assistance Program	The program is designed to reduce the monthly energy burden on low-income households by improving the energy efficiency of the home.



Introduction

Community Action

The idea of Community Action came out of the enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964. The overall purpose of the statute was to eliminate the causes and results of poverty in the United States. The Act established a federal Office of Economic Opportunity, state-level economic opportunity offices, and the new community-based organizations called Community Action Agencies evolved.

The Promise of Community Action is “to change people’s lives, embody the spirit of hope, improve communities, and make America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other. Community Action uses a results-oriented and outcome-focused approach to promote self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization to eradicate poverty, through empowerment and helping people help themselves.”

This work is not easy, and demands are always shifting and changing. Over the years, the federal government has changed as well. The funding is now part of the Block Grant System which allows for the flexibility and specialization of unique programs. Poverty is a systemic problem, and Community Action agencies apply a systemic approach to aid in reducing poverty levels.

Today there are over 1,000 Community Action agencies throughout the United States and Puerto Rico that provide services to more than a quarter of all Americans living in poverty and to several million more families with incomes only slightly higher than the poverty threshold each year; of that approximately 2.8 million are children under the age of eighteen (18) years old.

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. has established this Strategic Plan to effectively guide its efforts within the Service Region’s communities to strengthen partnerships, mobilize resources, and provide integrated services that promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

The Strategic Plan has utilized the Key Findings, Community Profile, community, and internal feedback and input, and critical needs identified within the Agency’s Community Needs Assessment. The Agency’s Community Needs Assessment was approved in regular session, by the Mid Florida Community Services’ Governing Board on October 10, 2018. The Community Needs Assessment process identified four (4) needs as the most critical for the Mid Florida Community Services’ Service Region. Ranked in the order of importance, they are as follows:

1. **Jobs/Employment** (including a livable wage, higher wages, job skills, etc.)
2. **Housing/Rental Assistance** (including utility bills, home repairs, weatherizing, etc.)
3. **Health & Wellness** (including healthy food, mental health, medical and dental care, etc.)
4. **Education/Training** (including literacy, vocational, workforce skill development training, life-skills training, etc.)

In addition to the Community Needs Assessment, Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. has examined and considered the customer satisfaction data and feedback collected from individuals and families served by Mid Florida Community Services, Inc.



Our Customer Satisfaction data has consistently provided the Agency feedback that indicates high levels of satisfaction. The customer feedback, through the Customer Satisfaction surveys, regularly expresses appreciation for services received and gives specific accolades toward individual staff members. Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. finds great value from the input of their customers/clients and continues to use the feedback and input to adjust processes, services/service delivery and improve customer/client relations.

Staff members serving as ROMA certified trainers for the Agency have been active in reviews, discussions and the overall formulation of the Strategic Plan. Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. currently has eight (8) ROMA certified trainers. Five (5) of the eight (8) trainers have participated in the formulation of the Strategic Plan and the identification of goals and objectives. They will be integrally involved in and responsible for the implementation phase of the Plan.

We have reviewed existing organizational documents, reporting and service performance and utilized an environment scan of current services. We reviewed community-identified needs and utilized customer/client feedback in the formulation of the Strategic Plan.

As a result of the complete review, goals and objectives have been formulated for the next three (3) years and are enumerated within this Strategic Plan. Following review and discussions, the Agency's vision, mission, and core values were updated within this Plan.

The goals and objectives that follow were developed to guide Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. in decisions relating to services, service delivery strategies, prioritization of resources allocated to services and create opportunities to maximize resources and funding to address the critical needs of individuals, families, and communities within its Service Region.



Goals & Objectives

Goal 1.

Enhance and improve job/employment opportunities and self-sufficiency for the low-income and vulnerable populations by increasing educational levels and the obtainment of job skills, abilities, and knowledge.

- *Objective 1.1* - Create a cross-program team of MFCS staff that will develop a checklist of community and existing customers/clients' specific needs for literacy, life-skill training, vocational/workforce training, education and job skills that will enable low-income and vulnerable individuals to obtain and retain employment at a livable wage and become self-sufficient.
- *Objective 1.2* - Following the development of specific training, education and job skills that will enable low-income and vulnerable individuals to obtain and retain employment and improve self-sufficiency levels, develop and implement changes to services/service delivery that will improve job/employment opportunities and/or self-sufficiency for low-income and vulnerable populations in the MFCS Service Region.
- *Objective 1.3* - Evaluate MFCS's internal processes and systems used specifically within the Family Self-Sufficiency Program. The process should assist MFCS customers/clients, from all program areas in gaining job skills, training and education that lead to job/employment obtainment/retention. Identified improvements and enhancements should be implemented to strengthen MFCS's ability to bridge the skill gap between low-income and vulnerable individuals and the needs of local employers that have job vacancies.
- *Objective 1.4* - Evaluate and determine areas of improvement of services/service delivery in the areas of early childhood education and development; safe, reliable and affordable childcare services for pre-school children; before and after school programs for school-aged children, emphasizing the needs of today's diverse families to enhance the family's ability to achieve self-sufficiency and/or employment obtainment.

Goal 2.

Enhance and improve the health and wellness within communities for the low-income and vulnerable individuals and families of the MFCS Service Region.

- *Objective 2.1* - Explore the feasibility of creating "local fresh produce" markets at MFCS facilities (schools, meal sites, senior centers, etc.).
- *Objective 2.2* - Improve and enhance nutritional, educational/learning opportunities for individuals and families within the MFCS Service Region that will encourage healthier food choices, cooking with fresh produce, and understanding the importance of healthier eating.
- *Objective 2.3* - Explore and implement improvements in health, nutritional and wellness services/service delivery for the low-income and vulnerable populations, including young/pre-school children, working adults and the growing and aging seniors' population in the MFCS Service Region.



Goal 3.**Enhance and improve safe, stable and affordable housing opportunities for the low-income and vulnerable individuals and families of the MFCS Service Region.**

- *Objective 3.1* - Identify specific needs and service gaps experienced by the customers/clients of MFCS and their ability to acquire safe, stable and affordable housing.
- *Objective 3.2* - Based on the specific needs and service gaps identified, determine the role and services that can be addressed by MFCS through external partnerships, contractual situations or the implementation of internal services.

Goal 4.**Actively advocate on behalf of low-income and vulnerable individuals, families, and communities.**

- *Objective 4.1* - Continue to identify, formalize, nurture and maintain relationships with key policy stakeholders, i.e., local, state and federal legislators, community partners/service providers, civic groups, businesses, faith-based organizations, schools, low-income populations, and residents.
- *Objective 4.2* - Identify, cultivate and develop improved partnerships and community access/resources to improve training, education, job skills/abilities/knowledge, job creation, employment obtainment, transportation and livable wages for low-income and vulnerable individuals and families within the MFCS Service Region.
- *Objective 4.3* - Advocate for low-income and vulnerable populations by initiating community conversations that lead to improved partnerships and community access/resources to address medical, dental, nutritional needs and care.
- *Objective 4.4* - Review, update and enhance communication tools that convey information regarding MFCS programs, services, and activities to increase awareness of and support for MFCS among community stakeholders, i.e., customers/clients, partners, funding sources, Governing Board members, employees, etc.

Goal 5.**Strengthen the Agency's ability to manage and improve its financial capacity needed to achieve Agency priorities and future service demands.**

- *Objective 5.1* - Create a long-range financial plan for developing additional/new revenue funding/sources through public or private grants, business revenue opportunities, fundraising opportunities, individual and corporate giving programs, etc.
- *Objective 5.2* - Strengthen and expand the volunteer base by identifying, attracting and recruiting volunteers.
- *Objective 5.3* - Develop a partnership resource plan that addresses long-range customer/client and Agency needs.
- *Objective 5.4* - Continue to enhance services and internal processes/tracking through the use of integrated technology capabilities.
- *Objective 5.5* - Develop a human capital strategy through workforce planning tools that will analyze the Agency's needs in preparing for its aging workforce with evidence-based strategies for recruiting, hiring and retaining/rehiring mature job candidates.



Strategic Planning Regulatory Requirements

Community Services Block Grant Mandates

Strategic Planning has been a requirement of the Community Action approach since the Office of Economic Opportunity Instruction 6320-1 issued in 1970. 6320-1 required the following:

“Community Action Agencies must develop both a long-range strategy and specific, short-range plans for using potential resources...In developing its strategy and plans, the CAA shall take into account the areas of greatest community need, the availability of resources, and its own strengths and limitations.”

Community Action CSBG funds continue to be governed by the CSBG Reauthorization Act of 1998 (CSBG Act) which requires certain planning processes of Community Action. The Act’s planning process requirements require that a strategic plan should always begin with a review of the data and conclusions drawn from the assessment of community needs and resources since it represents the agency’s overall strategy for how to meet those needs by best utilizing available resources. The strategic plan should then inform the Community Action Plan’s description of how the agency will deliver programs and services.



Community Services Block Grant Organizational Standards

In 2015, with the release of Information Memorandum 138, the Office of Community Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services established Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standards for CSBG Eligible Entities. Fifty-eight (58) organizational standards, organized into nine (9) categories were established for private nonprofit CAAs. Category Six of the Organizational Standards specifically addresses the requirements for 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 five years.

Standard 6.2 The approved strategic plan addresses the reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities, and empowerment of people with low incomes to become more self-sufficient.

Standard 6.3 The approved strategic plan contains family, agency, and 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 progress meeting the goals of the strategic plan within the past 12 months.



There are several additional Standards from the other categories related to strategic planning that agencies should consider working towards while conducting the strategic planning process. They include the following:

Standard 1.1 The organization demonstrates low-income individuals' participation in its activities.

Standard 1.2 The organization analyzes information collected directly from low-income individuals as part of the community assessment.

Standard 1.3 The organization has a systematic approach for collecting, analyzing, and reporting customer satisfaction data to the governing board.

Standard 4.1 The governing board has reviewed the organization's mission statement within the past five years and assured that: (1) the mission statement addresses poverty; and (2) the organization's programs and services are in alignment with the mission.

Standard 4.3 The organization's Community Action Plan and Strategic Plan document the continuous use of the full Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) cycle or comparable system (assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation). In addition, the organization documents having used the services of a ROMA-certified trainer (or equivalent) to assist in implementation.

Standard 9.3 The organization has presented to the governing board for review or action, at least within the past 12 months, an analysis of the agency's outcomes and any operational or strategic program adjustments and improvements identified as necessary.

Results Oriented Management and Accountability

In addition to CSBG mandates and Organizational Standards, agencies should also consider the connections between strategic planning and the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) framework. As a result of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) passed by Congress in 1993, the Office of Community Services formed the Monitoring and Assessment Task Force (MATF). In 1994, the MATF produced a National Strategic Plan endorsing a results-oriented approach for CAAs, including six national goals representing the outcomes found reported by CAAs.

Goal 1: Low-income people become more self-sufficient. (Family)

Goal 2: The conditions in which low-income people live are improved. (Community)

Goal 3: Low-income people own a stake in their community. (Community)

Goal 4: Partnerships among supporters and providers of service to low-income people are achieved. (Agency)

Goal 5: Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results. (Agency)

Goal 6: Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems. (Family)



National Goals of Community Action

Community action agencies receiving federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) monies must work to achieve the six (6) national performance goals with services created to meet the unique needs of the communities they serve. The six (6) National Performance Goals are:

- Goal 1. Low-income people become more self-sufficient.
- Goal 2. The conditions in which low-income people live are improved.
- Goal 3. Low-income people own a stake in their community.
- Goal 4. Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved.
- Goal 5. Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.
- Goal 6. Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.

In 2017, the Department of Health and Human Services revised the National Goals from six (6) to three (3). The new goals will be phased in at the start of the federal fiscal year 2018 program. The new goals are as follows:

- 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.



Evaluating and Updating the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is a management tool for the Agency that requires ongoing implementation, quarterly progress reviews, and annual updates, as needed.

Ongoing Implementation

The 2019-2021 Strategic Plan, upon approval of the Governing Board, will be implemented by the staff and management team of Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. Managers and staff members will align annual work plans, performance indicators and budgets within the Agency's Strategic Plan.

The Executive Director and senior leadership members will oversee and direct the successful implementation of the plan and each goal/objective.

Implementation efforts will begin in January 2019.

Quarterly Review

Each active strategic goal/objective will be reviewed on a quarterly basis. Each quarter the assigned staff/team members responsible for an active goal/objective will prepare a status update to be shared and disseminated throughout the Agency. This structure will ensure that staff, in all departments and at all levels, is informed of the progress. Dissemination will provide an opportunity for those not directly assigned to the goal/objective activities to also contribute input or additional information.

Quarterly reviews will be documented to capture learned information and accomplishments throughout the process, beginning with activities starting January 2019.

Annual Implementation Plan

An Annual Implementation Plan will be established by Mid Florida Community Services, Inc. management to guide the activities associated with each year of the Strategic Plan. The Implementation Plan will be established each January, following the annual update covered by this Strategic Plan.

A Plan evaluation of progress including implementation activities, updates, and accomplishments will be shared annually with the Governing Board during a regularly scheduled board meeting.





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