



Health & Human Services 2021-2024 Strategic Plan



Welcome to the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan!

It brings fresh relevance and focus to our ongoing strategic priorities. The plan leverages the substantial learning and adaptation that happened through the unprecedented challenges of 2020. It is unflinching in the urgent focus for new conversations and action regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion for our staff and all the people we serve. This plan also embraces leading edge approaches to organizational agility, resilience, and effectiveness.

Most importantly, this plan rises from the voices of the people who do the work at Health & Human Services every single day. Their voices are clear and unequivocal. This is not an idealized plan chasing mirage solutions. In fact, it is blunt in the realization that pandemic, economic upheaval, social justice crises, and fires have made long-term social and health problems even more severe for thousands of people in Lane County.

And these challenges will not abate anytime soon.

The voices in this plan seek clarity, smarter use of resources, science, and data—for real results. They demand sensitivity and awareness about people and communities that are historically marginalized—and the intentional dismantling of the obvious and subtle tools of oppression. It is a plan where the first and last priorities are people. The people who do the work, who sweat the details, and who go the extra mile because the job, the mission, and the people they serve matter. Simultaneously this plan makes a heavy lift to do more for the people of Lane County who depend on our services. It is about improving access, the patient/client experience, and ultimately achieving better outcomes.

We hope that reading this plan sharpens your understanding of the scope and complexity of our work at Health & Human Services. We hope that those we serve in the future will note the big and small changes that will make a difference in their lives. And we hope the professionals we depend on to carry out the mission will benefit with better resources, balance, and satisfaction knowing everyone is doing the best they can in the face of incredible challenges.

Health & Human Services Mission Statement

The mission of Health and Human Services is to promote and protect the health and well-being of individuals, families, and our communities.

Health & Human Services Triple Aim Goal

Like our previous plan, this plan is driven by a triple-aim goal of providing quality care, improving community health, and optimizing resources. This plan will leverage and focus our strengths and build an even more effective and efficient organization in the process. The results of this plan will bring better access to services, better integration of care, and better outcomes at every level.



Continuity and Resilience

Lane County Health & Human Services is a complex organization balancing clinical care, poverty programs, policy initiatives, care coordination, case management, and so much more. It would be easy to allow the sheer scope of our mission and services to overwhelm us; that’s why in 2012 we identified four foundational elements to our strategic plan. These four “pillars” stand to offer value, impact, and developmental direction to every employee and partner of Health & Human Services.

Before the pandemic unfolded in 2019, the leadership team sought to carry the strategic pillars of the previous plan forward—with adaptations and updates. The pillars are:



PILLAR 1

Equity and Access

Assure clients get the service they need, when they need it.



PILLAR 2

Integration and Prevention

Use prevention and integrated care to improve health.



PILLAR 3

Data and Analytics

Use data to improve quality and work smarter.



PILLAR 4

Staff Development and Efficiency

Hire, develop, and retain the best talent to serve our clients and our community.

And through the pandemic and the many challenges of 2020, the pillars became even more relevant and urgent. It is not unreasonable to look at each pillar as if it were “Job One.” And that is a good thing because the real potential of these pillars emerges in their interdependence, where strategic goals can impact two or more pillars. It is powerful to take any two of these pillars and ask, for example, how can Data and Analytics help improve Integration and Prevention? How can we enhance Equity and Access through Staff Development?

There is an important distinction between Pillars and Goals. The pillars represent stable, long-term, strategic focal points. They reside at a broader level, a higher strategic altitude. The goals, on the other hand, clarify the measurable action steps the plan will undertake in the next three years. For this plan, the strategic characteristics of the pillars were updated using survey, focus groups, and leadership team input. The goals reflect operational and developmental priorities. And they aim at creating improvement in multiple pillars.

Both the pillars and the goals must address the obvious and urgent issues facing Health & Human Services. The obvious strategic opportunity for Health & Human Services is to steadily enhance resource integration, simplicity, and efficiency. This is easy to say but extremely hard to accomplish, largely because of the complexity inherent in the very broad mission of the agency. While there are certainly internal bureaucratic and financial roadblocks, the most significant source of difficulty stems from the profound interdependence of behavioral health issues, poverty prejudice, housing shortages, addiction, and citations/arrests/incarceration. Anyone challenged by any one of these issues, will be challenged by the others as well. This plan must not only address these issues, but also the profound consequences of their combined effects.

Helping people break out of the negative spirals these issues bring is the focus of this strategic plan. Individuals typically need resources and support from many departments—but our systems do not enable easy access or holistic case management. This is the problem we were addressing with our “Dovetail” effort highlighted in the previous strategic plan. The results of this effort have been very promising. In this plan we seek to extend and expand this approach. The result should be effective systems and resource integration with better outcomes and experience for the people we serve.

Beyond Bandwidth

Any strong strategic plan considers the organization’s capacity to add new programs, people, or effect changes. Typically, these are conversations about the availability of resources—human and financial—to accomplish growth or change. This, however, has not been a typical time. This plan emerges from a literal firestorm of challenges. The staff have improvised, adapted, made do, pushed through, and in so doing, kept a bad situation from being much, much worse.

This sustained stress and effort have taken a toll on the staff. Inefficiencies, red-tape, and normal frustrations now carry more significant consequences. In a multi-crisis situation resources get spread extremely thin, not just for Health & Human Services, but also for our critical partners in health care and nonprofits. Everyone is stretched to the limit, in the county, the state, and nationally. It is not hyperbole to say this experience is unprecedented.



This plan is intentional in focusing on our people. Staff are experiencing stress that goes way beyond bandwidth issues and traditional burnout. This is not about whining. True to form, the requests from staff focus on reducing stress by making smarter decisions, eliminating wasted time, steps, and resources. Empowering front-line initiative and access to helpful information. Reducing re-work. Filling new seats with equitable recruiting and onboarding—quickly. All for the sake of staunching crises in individual lives, families, and the broader community. This is about focusing on our people so they can better focus on the problems at hand.

There is always tension between any strategy and the “real world” problems that the strategy seeks to address. We know we need to be clear about the connections between our strategic focal points and the work we do every day. This is where our strategies offer clear guidance for action; the professionals who contributed to this plan are very clear about specific efforts that must be taken. Every person, in every division, will take part in critical actions that move us toward our triple-aim goal of providing quality care, improving community health, and optimizing resources each and every day.

Health & Human Services Goals



GOAL 1:

Promote Equity and Decrease Disparities

Perhaps even more transformative than the pandemic is the urgency for real change in long-standing practices supporting marginalization, racism, and oppression. The death of George Floyd was a crucible moment where something fundamental seemed to shift. There is a clear feeling of “no more,” among a much greater portion of the population. That said, the rhetoric and policies of oppression are still holding sway in politics and societal norms.

In a substantial survey given to Health & Human Services staff, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) showed up as a primary focus point across the organization. The quantitative data was clear about the prioritization of DEI issues. But it was the open-ended responses that surfaced the strong commitment to these issues. It was a blend of exasperation, frustration, and urgency. It was about drawing a line that says “enough; actions are needed, now!” Their responses acknowledged the work that is already being done and called out the need for those efforts to be expanded, extended, and supported. And they see these issues as demanding a sustained focus for comprehensive cultural change. A big task and a profound opportunity to lead by example.

The changes begin in the language, behaviors, awareness, and sensitivities of all staff. The intent is to develop a culture where these issues are points of pride and accomplishment, where DEI values and work are celebrated. These efforts extend through every department, and every process. The lens of DEI is used in reviewing past efforts, success and failures, ways to improve—and of course, planning.

An Issue in the Community Too

The sensitivities around DEI are also reinforced by the challenges of access and engagement experienced by people in Lane County who are marginalized, misunderstood, and often trapped in cycles of shelter, food, and work insecurity. For those on the front lines at Health & Human Services, issues of disparity and oppression are plainly seen and widespread. It is not that “these people” are a “problem to be solved.” It is that they are people confronting significant complex challenges, deserving of compassion, dignity, access, and opportunities to build a better life. This plan will honor DEI values by identifying and breaking down barriers, building understanding, and adapting to the specific needs of everyone in Lane County.

GOAL 2:

Integrated support for those at the intersection of behavioral health, homelessness, and public safety

Let’s be clear; even modest efforts here will require a heavy lift. The concept of an “integrated approach” is easy enough to understand, but then success demands the applied integration of data sets, systems, intake protocols, assessment, clinical care models, intra-departmental and inter-department communication—and communication with dozens of external agencies and stakeholders. And of course, all of this must occur given guidelines of legality, compliance, funding streams, and practicalities.

There is an old expression that “Simple doesn’t mean easy.” And it certainly applies here. An integrated approach makes common sense—but it is a substantial challenge. That is why the “Dovetail” effort established in the previous strategic plan is so important. It reflects a strategy of identifying the people with the greatest need and then working dynamically to achieve the best possible outcomes. Through lessons learned with Dovetail and similar efforts, best practices, iterative adaptations, building new process models will emerge offering improvements for the whole organization. The integrated approach is about using incremental and continuous improvements to drive organizational transformation.

And Communities Too

Work over the past decade reinforces the need for integrated community partnerships as well. This plan aims at developing community wide care coordination and referral partnerships. Along with efficiencies and better care outcomes, these partnerships can become the foundation of a county-wide behavioral health crisis center. These plans centralize available services and programs resulting in better access, a better experience for patients and clients, and more comprehensive solutions.

GOAL 3:

Strengthen a Supportive Infrastructure

Health & Human Services continues to grow. The mission continues to broaden and increase in complexity. And the organization is adapting and responding to unprecedented demands and changes. While staff did not say this about themselves, Health & Human Services is often finding success despite a very complex infrastructure. Staff are having to help clients through awkward, bureaucratic, and cumbersome processes. This is true for staff working directly with the community as well as staff in more administrative roles often sandwiched between incompatible systems and demands. They are unable to gather reliable and accurate data as systems often operate in silos and literally cannot interact with one another.

These are the realities when the challenges inherent in the mission to “protect the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities” are confronted in the real world. This breadth and complexity puts intense stress on a system that is a patchwork of professional systems, people, databases, and legal constraints. There is nothing unique about the challenges facing Health & Human Services—these challenges are pervasive throughout the entire health care and social services community. And certainly, the calamities of 2020 have highlighted every fissure and gap in the system.

It is important to note that this goal is not new. Infrastructure development has been called out as a strategic priority for years and significant progress is being made. Indeed, there is momentum in this area. There is a clear feeling that there is a lot of “low hanging fruit” that can make big improvements with small changes. Quality improvement efforts are running throughout the organization and they are helping shape a new vision of Health & Human Services as a more integrated and streamlined organization. Steps will be taken to increase cross-departmental communication and collaboration, standardize data governance practices, and simplify processes wherever possible.

Empowerment is a term that shows up in the planning dialogue again and again. The basic idea is to empower everyone in the organization to have both voice and agency to identify problems and offer improvements—and solutions. And all the while, continuously working to integrate resources to drive efficiency, measurable standards, and innovation.

GOAL 4:

Focus on our People

by enhancing systems and supports for improved recruitment, onboarding, and retention.

The pandemic has given rise to a new kind of hero; the people on the front lines helping others even though offering that help puts them at risk. When you listen to the voices of the team members at Health & Human Services their focus is unwavering. They care about doing the right thing and taking care of the individuals and families who are suffering. They care about showing people how to help themselves and break the cycles of poverty and addiction. Every single element of this plan depends entirely on the capabilities and commitment of our teams. And we know they need more support than they are getting now.

Support begins in a steady effort to retain a more diverse workforce. We need to better understand how recruiting can lack transparency and preemptively shut the door on potentially strong candidates. We need to embrace the promise of resiliency, cultural awareness, language sensitivity, and innovation that comes with diversity. And yes, this effort is in direct alignment with all the discussions of DEI and improvements in infrastructure.

Once an employee is onboarded, more care needs to be taken to offer development opportunities year over year. We can begin building a more integrated organization simply by establishing more job-shadowing, mentoring, and on-the-job leadership practices. In planning discussions, employees were eager to participate in formal and informal efforts to better see and understand what everyone is doing at Health & Human Services—not just the people in their own departments. They were also conscious, however, of the reality that these efforts demand staffing levels that will allow the time for mentoring and job-shadowing to actually happen. When you are working at “the red line” every day, the idea of job shadowing or attending a training program is a luxury.

That’s why this plan brings a substantive focus on the causes of burnout and workplace stress—and possible improvements or solutions. This is not a problem that will be fixed by any single thing. But it absolutely begins with a strong commitment to care for the well-being and development of employees who have demonstrated their willingness to work tirelessly to meet the mission of the agency. The goal is to make development opportunities and work/life balance issues a part of the ongoing leadership conversations in the agency. It is about standing up real and sustainable programs to identify and assist people that are exhausted and overworked—and to prevent those conditions from happening in the first place.

Not a Conclusion

The pillars stand as sustained points of strategic vision, helping us make sense of a world that is changing substantially and rapidly. These pillars are intentionally interdependent creating the opportunity for innovation and synergy.



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Equity and Access

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PILLAR 2

Integration and Prevention

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Data and Analytics

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PILLAR 4

Staff Development and Efficiency

Hire, develop, and retain the best talent to serve our clients and our community.

The goals generate the demand for near-term actions that will create measurable, relevant, and sustainable outcomes.

Goal 1: Promote equity and decrease disparities.

Goal 2: Integrated support for those at the intersection of behavioral health, homelessness, and public safety

Goal 3: Strengthen a supportive infrastructure.

Goal 4: Focus on our people.

This plan also features a parallel focus on data/science/systems to enable Health & Human Services to understand and anticipate the challenges of the future while delivering the best possible support to the people of Lane County today.

This document stands as an overview, a comprehensive framework, and a summary of the input from employees, stakeholders, and leadership. The Pillars and Goals in this plan find their roots in our previous plans, and they also break new ground and shape an exciting new vision for what is possible. And so, this is not a conclusion. It is a beginning. It is an invitation. It is a challenge to galvanize the resources and efforts of Health & Human Services and help the people of Lane County thrive.



2021-2024 Strategic Plan Summary

FOUR PILLARS



PILLAR 1

Equity & Access



PILLAR 2

Integration & Prevention



PILLAR 3

Data & Analytics



PILLAR 4

Staff Development & Efficiency

GOALS	CORRESPONDING STRATEGIES		
GOAL 1 Promote equity and decrease disparities	Strengthen Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure shared language, awareness, and practices Promote daily behaviors that support DEI values Promote a sustained and vibrant communication culture that recognizes and celebrates DEI work and values 	Implement the equity lens across the department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize resources to actively coach and lead sustained efforts of DEI work Increase use of data to assist in planning and evaluation of our programming, policies, and services 	Increase outreach, engagement, and access with our marginalized populations and communities facing disparities
GOAL 2 Integrated support for those at the intersection of behavioral health, homelessness, and public safety	Develop a community-wide care coordination referral system in partnership with community organizations Continue to build out our H&HS Dovetail care coordination strategies	Build a community behavioral health crisis center in partnership with community organizations	Stabilize housing through investment in permanent supportive housing and outreach efforts
GOAL 3 Strengthen a supportive infrastructure	Strengthen our intra departmental collaboration and coordination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase understanding of our individual, Division, and Department roles Enhance collaboration across the Department Increase communication 	Provide staff access to improved resources, tools, and information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplify processes Create more efficient navigation Build awareness and acumen for Quality Improvement among all employees 	Invest in technology efforts that enhance efficiencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train and empower staff with access to data Adopt a data governance strategy Implement technology platforms to improve data sharing
GOAL 4 Focus on our people	Hire more diverse staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement transparent and intentional hiring practices Account for structural barriers and biases and honor lived experiences Promote multi-cultural and multi-lingual representation 	Support opportunities for development throughout the employment lifecycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen orientation and onboarding program Build formal and informal programs for mentoring, job shadowing, on-the-job development, and leadership development 	Create policies and practices that mitigate the causes and effects of workplace stress and promote health and well-being