



Aroostook County Action Program

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**ACAP 3-Year Strategic Plan  
2018-2021**

Approved by ACAP Board of Directors  
November 16, 2017

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## **Strategic Plan**

### **Purpose Approach and Methods**

The overall purpose of this Strategic Plan is to more fully develop ACAP's commitment to the mission, vision and values of the organization, foster and nurture a culture that identifies and supports the mission and vision, and maintain a clear focus on the organization's strategic agenda throughout all of its decision making processes and activities.

As required by the Federal Office of Community Services, in FY 2016, a set national Organizational Standards were developed for Community Action Agencies to follow as a pathway towards excellence. Category 3 of these standards states that each Community Action Agency conduct a community assessment of its service delivery area every three years. This assessment must collect and analyze current qualitative and quantitative data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, race/ethnicity for their service area(s). From this data, the community assessment must identify key findings on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed. To meet Category 6, a strategic plan must be developed every 5 years and must also be approved by the governing board.

Additionally, ACAP's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan is consistent with the Results Oriented Management Accountability (ROMA) performance-based system that was created for Community Action Agencies nationwide, to help achieve continuous program improvement and accountability. There are five basic principles of ROMA to ensure agencies are focused on outcomes: Assessment, Planning, Implementation, Achievement of Results, and Evaluation.

ACAP's Community Assessment of Aroostook County, Maine conducted by John Snow, Inc. (JSI), in collaboration with ACAP staff, was finalized and presented to ACAP's Board and approved at its February 23, 2017 meeting. The elements of strategic plan are purposely tied together to the community assessment's key findings as drivers of the established priority areas within ACAP's 2018-2021 plan. To carry out the development of the strategic plan for the priority areas, ACAP established a strategic planning committee comprised of staff and Board Members, who during the summer of 2017, met to advance the details of areas two through four and, with input from ACAP's Family Council, the development of area one. Additionally, a draft of this plan was shared with all Agency staff at the Annual Agency Day event where staff engaged in exercises intended to gather input for the priority areas. The draft was also presented to the Board at its September 2017 meeting at which time additional input and guidance was provided for the plans development.

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The following is ACAP's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan:

	Strategic Priority Areas	GOALS
1	Adopt and Implement a Centralized Service Model for all ACAP Customers with a Two-Gen approach for customers with young children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Adopt a “no wrong door approach” for customers entering ACAP. All customers enter through a centralized intake system that calculates presumptive eligibility for all agency programs.</li> <li>B. Measure customer needs through completion of a Crisis to Thrive survey that determines internal navigation to eligible services.</li> <li>C. Evaluate current agency structure and design an organizational structure that will support a centralized service model.</li> <li>D. Establish a case management system within the agency to address strategies to empower customers to develop education and training, budgeting and financial management goals that will lead them to a self-sustaining income.</li> <li>E. Develop pathways with customers to access services. Customers raising children will take the pathway to a Two-Generation approach with a family coach. Other customers will take similar steps with a career coach. The goal of both pathways is to lead customers to economic stability.</li> <li>F. Ensure internal cross-collaboration and communication through ongoing meetings of the Family Council.</li> <li>G. Collaborate with other local and state social service organizations, workplaces, and educational providers to ultimately reduce the rate of poverty among individuals and families in Aroostook County.</li> </ul>

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2	Strengthen Partnerships and Foster Cross-Sector Collaboration	<p>A. Conduct a Needs Assessment/Resource Availability Assessment to determine the common needs and available resources among social service agencies and faith-based organizations in Aroostook County.</p> <p>B. Identify ways to partner with other civic and community groups, social service agencies, faith-based organizations, or private sector entities via review of the Needs Assessment /Resource Availability Assessment responses.</p> <p>C. Establish partnerships, through relationship-building, to develop trust, overcome any “turf issues”, and foster collaboration among identified agencies and entities.</p> <p>D. Also use the Needs Assessment / Resource Availability Assessment results to identify needs for shared services for administrative functions (i.e., human resources, payroll, clerical and other services) with other agencies.</p>
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3	Create Opportunities for Productive Dialogue on the Causes and Impacts of Poverty	<p>A. Create opportunities to engage the stakeholders who are actually living in poverty or who maybe have recently ascended out of a poverty situation to hear real stories and to understand and develop a true message about the causes and impacts of poverty without stigmatizing their situation. Access resources and identify mentors for those in poverty to help advance the dialogue.</p> <p>B. Look at ACAP's existing internal materials and education programs for language improvement as well as develop a guide for external and internal messaging that focuses on positive dialogue and language surrounding issues of poverty.</p> <p>C. Share experiential knowledge with stakeholders and service providers, spreading the message that everyone/society benefits from having a better social economic environment.</p> <p>D. Use certified poverty coaches and media communication to dispel myths associated with poverty, sharing more than just success stories, while delivering consistent and continual messaging about the causes and impacts of poverty.</p> <p>E. Develop a multi-faceted approach to delivering messaging and services about poverty, remaining open to best practice models from around the country and world that spotlight communities that have overcome the challenges and barriers of high poverty rates.</p>
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4	<p>Continue to Address Social Determinants and Barriers That Have Impact on Health and Well -Being</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Continue to support existing local initiatives, such as the new Homeless Shelter initiative in any way feasible for the agency.</li> <li>B. Reenergize the Agency's financial empowerment efforts within the Agency's case management, counseling and Two-Gen programs, as applicable.</li> <li>C. Develop and foster the Two-Gen model agency-wide to address all angles of the broad array of social determinants and barriers people face in their daily lives.</li> <li>D. Identify best practices and models that have proven successful across the country to reduce or remove social determinants and barriers in the areas of socioeconomic status, housing transportation, employment opportunities, overweight/obesity and food insecurity and nutrition.</li> <li>E. Be a conduit of assistance to ARTS who will be reviewing the current transportation system in the region and to come up with suggestions for improvements recognizing that Head Start also has a transportation system and identify ways to collaborate and partner with other local transportation services. Identify employers who might benefit from employer-based transportation, like the Sitel model. Look into RideShare models to address transportation/commuting issues in rural Aroostook County.</li> <li>F. Determine the feasibility of developing a program that partners with local garages, car dealerships, banks, credit unions, private foundations and possibility school/tech programs to assist with client purchase, maintenance and repair costs for vehicles.</li> <li>G. When we conduct meetings with stakeholders (as addressed in Priority 2 Goals), identify social determinants and obstacles and discuss ideas to address needs associated with those issues.</li> <li>H. Recognize there are many families who are only one or two occupants large living in substandard housing who could benefit from a mini home project that would meet the standards of a lender and explore that option with community partners such as NMCC, Job Corps and local trade schools, and building supply companies, among others.</li> <li>I. Encourage the addition of and continue to support existing programs that increase nutrition education and food security programs by doing things like: adding recipes in the food cupboard and on the website, offering cooking classes. Coordinate with other local agencies offering food security programs. Work on ways to improve access to nutritious foods.</li> </ul>
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5	Reduce the Burden of Behavioral Health on the Population and Service System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. Identify resources to support the sustainability of ACAP's initiatives to promote substance abuse prevention and seek out, through community partners, or through innovative programming, ways to also support treatment and recovery initiatives in Aroostook County.</li><li>B. Provide training and support for staff to identify substance use and/or mental health issues and develop strategies with staff to work effectively with those issues and helping customers to overcome stigmas, encouraging access to and of services.</li><li>C. Promote education around the stigmas versus realities of mental illnesses and improve access to and usage of mental health resources available in the community.</li><li>D. Encourage the sharing of successful approaches with our customers who are struggling with substance use and/or mental health issues.</li></ul>