

# Strategic Plan 2015 to 2020

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## Developmental Disability Services of Jackson County – eitas

In creating a new strategic plan for eitas, 2015 to 2020, we have looked at pursuing strategic elements that involve both the external services and supports we provide and external relationships, as well as internal issues of maintaining a well trained, high quality, dedicated and supported staff to meet the needs of the individuals we support and their own.

### *External Focus*

- *Funded Services – Employment; Housing; Day Services*
- *Direct Services – Transportation and Support Coordination*
- *Environment – System Redesign; DMH; Tax Levy*
- *New Programming – What do we want to focus on providing/funding that we or no one else is providing at the moment? What are the unmet needs?*

### *Funded Services*

Traditionally our SB 40 Board has funded sheltered workshops, residential programs, and day services through our tax levy. All of these services are in a state of flux, mainly due to national laws and rules that have been changed to augment the services and supports traditionally given to individuals with developmental disabilities. Additionally, our transportation services will have to change in order to meet the requirements of the new laws and rules. How we respond to the changes must be assessed and determined in order to maintain a quality level of services.

#### **Employment**

For the last few years sheltered employment has been under attack mainly due to segregation issues, sub-minimum wages, lack of choice, and sometimes charges of exploitation. Several states have been sued by the Department of Justice over the above issues, and we have no idea if Missouri will be sued as well. The 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act incorporates a number of changes targeted at limiting access to find employment in their communities. However, it may start to impact the number of people entering workshop employment, which could have serious

results in Jackson County. It is clear that having more community jobs for persons with developmental disabilities will be critical in the near future.

**Strategy 1:** Support the creation and discovery of inclusive community jobs within Jackson County.

**Actions:**

- Meet with local Vocational Rehabilitation staff to see how eitas can assist and be involved with the new requirements around transition planning.
- Devote new funds, if available, to the development of new programs supporting community jobs and education employers.
- Devote funds, if available, to the creation of an eitas staff position that assists with new job development, including benefit specialization.

**Strategy 2:** Assist workshops in transitioning from a traditional workshop model to one that incorporates community employment programs, should the need arise.

**Actions:**

- Meet with DESE to determine changes needed on a local level to meet new requirements, should they change.
- Develop funding stream to move funds from traditional workshop services to new ones.
- Continue to monitor sheltered employment changes across the country for impacts locally.
- Explore the possibility of eitas doing job development directly and not through other providers.

## **Housing**

The new CMS (Centers for Medicaid and Medicare) rule proposes major changes for residential services, housing and Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) in general. The intent is to further define and refine what can constitute a “quality life” for a person with disabilities. It better defines the qualities of integrated community settings for residential services and employment; individual’s rights; freedom of choice; and person-centered planning for person with intellectual or developmental disabilities served under a Medicaid HCBS waiver. Downsizing large group homes, increasing

community involvement and further protecting individual's rights and choices will all have dramatic effects on housing providers in Jackson County and across Missouri.

**Strategy 1:** Develop alternatives to our current group homes that do not meet the new CMS guidelines.

**Actions:**

- Work with local builders on inclusive housing and apartment projects that meet the needs.
- Put existing property up for sale and use proceeds to develop more suitable housing.
- Work with our traditionally funded residential providers to make changes to current properties and assist in planning moves from non-compliant residences to ones that meet the new CMS standards.

**Day Services**

As with housing, CMS' new rule encourages changes in day services to comply more with their new philosophy of inclusion and person-centeredness. The preference is for non-facility –based services where a majority of an individual's day is spent out in the community rather than in a segregated program. Additionally, if further changes occur with sheltered employment day services can be impacted drastically, as day services have become a fall-back service in states where sheltered employment has been reduced.

**Strategy 1:** Continue to monitor both federal and state activities around day services to be proactive in meeting any changes.

**Actions:**

- Work on a state level with DMH's responses to CMS rule changes to provide input and help shape day services directions.
- Work with local day service providers to assist them in responding to changes and any requested alterations in their services.

## Direct Services

### **Transportation**

Department of Transportation (D.O.T.) services continue to be in great demand, filling a need in both routine transportation and with the new Advance Call system. It is critical that we be able to respond appropriately to the changing needs of those we support. With possible changes in sheltered employment and day services, and increasing needs for more customized transportation we need to continue to look at alternative scheduling and redefining our fleet of vehicles in order to be as effective and efficient as possible.

**Strategy 1:** Explore all avenues in replacing aging vehicles.

#### **Actions:**

- Apply for newly released FTA funds through MARC process starting in September 2014. Matching funds in the amount of 20% will need to be available in the 2015 eitas budget.
- Budget to purchase new vehicles outright if grant funds are inadequate.

**Strategy 2:** Work to increase funding of all transportation services through grants and other sources:

#### **Actions:**

- Contact KCATA to begin a dialogue about restoring the \$201,000 cut initiated by Kansas City, Missouri
- Explore other state and federal grant and funding opportunities for both physical plant and operational dollars.
- Increase transportation rates in DMH contract for FY 2016 beginning July 1, 2015.

**Strategy 3:** Work with KCATA and MARC to look at possible partnerships and cost savings.

#### **Actions:**

- Partner with KCATA to provide driver training; possible sharing of transportation software resources.
- Participate in the “Ride KC” initiative.

### **Support Coordination**

With all the changes happening at the Department of Mental Health, Developmental Disability (DD) Division we have to carefully weigh our options in continuing to expand Targeted Case Management services. Future Medicaid rate changes could impact eitas’ ability to effectively provide support coordination and to fund related items such as the Hope Waiver and transportation expansion.

**Strategy 1:** Assess the financial impact that rate changes could have on eitas.

**Strategy 2:** Develop responses to any rate adjustments or further contract changes from DMH when contract is renewed on July 1, 2015.

## **Environment**

### **System Redesign**

This effort appears to be in a state of disarray at the time of this writing. With the budget cuts and vetoes made by Governor Nixon, there have been major changes made in the makeup of the regional offices apart from any changes suggested during system redesign talks. A better solution might have been reached by looking at how the local option could be combined with layoffs and office closings to transition things faster. One county has already dropped out of a pilot site, and others have great concerns about some of the operational aspects of the redesign. Eitas has been asked to consider being an “Urban County” in Phase 2 of the redesign in 12 to 18 months, but until results are seen from Phase 1, it would be best to hold off any commitment on eitas’ part.

**Strategy 1:** Continue to participate and monitor progress made in the system redesign initiative to ensure outcomes meet the needs of Jackson County and eitas.

### **Department of Mental Health**

The Department of Mental Health will have new leadership starting on September 1, 2014, and there is uncertainty as to how the new Director will

fulfill her role and what type of relationships will be develop with the SB 40 Boards. It is hoped that with her financial and budgetary acumen that recent issues around budget shortfalls and inadequate funding levels will be resolved. Working closely with the new Department leadership and developing a positive relationship will be paramount in achieving improvements in the DD system. In addition, there is a new Director at the Kansas City Regional Office, developing a strong working relationship with him is also important.

**Strategy 1:** Work with Valerie Huhn on state issues and develop a positive relationship that supports eitas as well as DMH.

**Strategy 2:** Work with Tim Wholf to support his administration and to resolve long standing issues with the RO and further development of a stronger partnership on a local level.

### **Tax Levy Funding**

The Jackson County tax levy has been flat for the last 8 years, thus restricting us from expanding any services that are paid for through the levy. Exploration of increasing the levy by any substantial amount has been stymied by the Hancock ruling that places a ceiling on rates, that ceiling currently being .0748. Anything beyond that would require another vote of the citizens, which would not be advisable in the current economic climate.

**Strategy 1:** Request to set the tax levy for 2014 at .753, the current ceiling rate that was determined for 2013.

## **New Services and Supports**

There appears to be a number of unmet needs that are growing in scope each year as limits on funding prevent us from exploring new programs and services. With possible limits on expansion of Medicaid services, and obvious limits set on the tax levy funds, we should look at considering other means of obtaining funds and developing new programs. One option that has proven viable for a number of other SB 40 Boards is the creation of an independent, yet related, 501 © 3 subsidiary. Such an organization would be able to accept donations, go after different types of grants, and seek funds from foundations for specific projects. Some of the unmet needs are:

- **Retirement and aging services** for individuals who want to leave sheltered employment or day services. The number of people reaching age 60 and above grows each day and there are many people who still work just to get

out of the house and have something to do. Daily activities with others their same age would be a welcome change.

- **Funding for hospital aides** when persons with DD are hospitalized and Medicaid will not pay for both the hospitalization and someone to stay with the patient. This is a growing problem and affects the health and safety of the individual who is ill.
- **Employment assistance** that goes beyond vocational rehab and already funded services – having a benefits specialist on eitas staff; offering employer training and education; providing for special accommodations someone might need; developing a small business incubation center.
- **Improved transition programming** that has specialists on eitas staff that works with the school districts to improve the transition process as young adults leave school.
- **Healthy living and lifestyles** where assistance is given to individuals and providers to develop health plans and initiatives for better nutrition, diet, and exercise. Development of a community Health Worker position specializing in persons with developmental disabilities would be a priority as well.
- **Best practices** determined on a national level will be endorsed and encouraged on a local level – within eitas through CARF accreditation and adoption of best practice models for our direct services as well as with local providers in existing services and new services as they are developed.

## Internal Focus

Internal focus means what can we do with the resources and staff we have at eitas to improve the lives of those we support as well as each other. Internal cohesiveness and sense of purpose and mission are critical for our success. How do we foster that and create a self-sustaining culture of gentleness and service to others?

### **A Gentle Culture**

Continue the message of Gentle Teaching and ensure that it is incorporated in all we do including interactions between eitas staff and with external entities.

[Strategy 1](#): Host the International Gentle Teaching Conference in Kansas City in 2015.

[Strategy 2](#): Continue to support Gentle Teaching classes and activities that promote gentle cultures in the provision of services and within eitas.

### **Person Centered**

All staff are well-trained in person-centered philosophies and utilize tools to be successful with each other and with those we support to help people control and direct their lives.

[Strategy 1](#): Plans and outcomes focus on achieving what is important to people as well as what is important for people.

[Strategy 2](#): All DOT staff are trained for positive interactions with riders and families.

Action: All riders have one-page profiles that are carried in the vehicles for reference.

[Strategy 3](#): Eitas staff develop resources to help people have happy lives.

### **Collaborative Relationships**

Eitas staff working together are the key to achieving the mission of the organization. Positive relationships, both internally and externally are the norm.

[Strategy 1](#): Eitas employees contribute to the strategic plan and have input where possible to decisions involving them.

[Strategy 2](#): Eitas employees work to understand others perspectives and to resolve issues that separate us.

[Strategy 3](#): Relationships between staff are strengthened and everyone understands the contributions that others make.

Actions:

- All positions have “donuts” that outline their areas of responsibilities.



- Everyone who wants to has a one page profile so that others can help and support them in the best possible way.