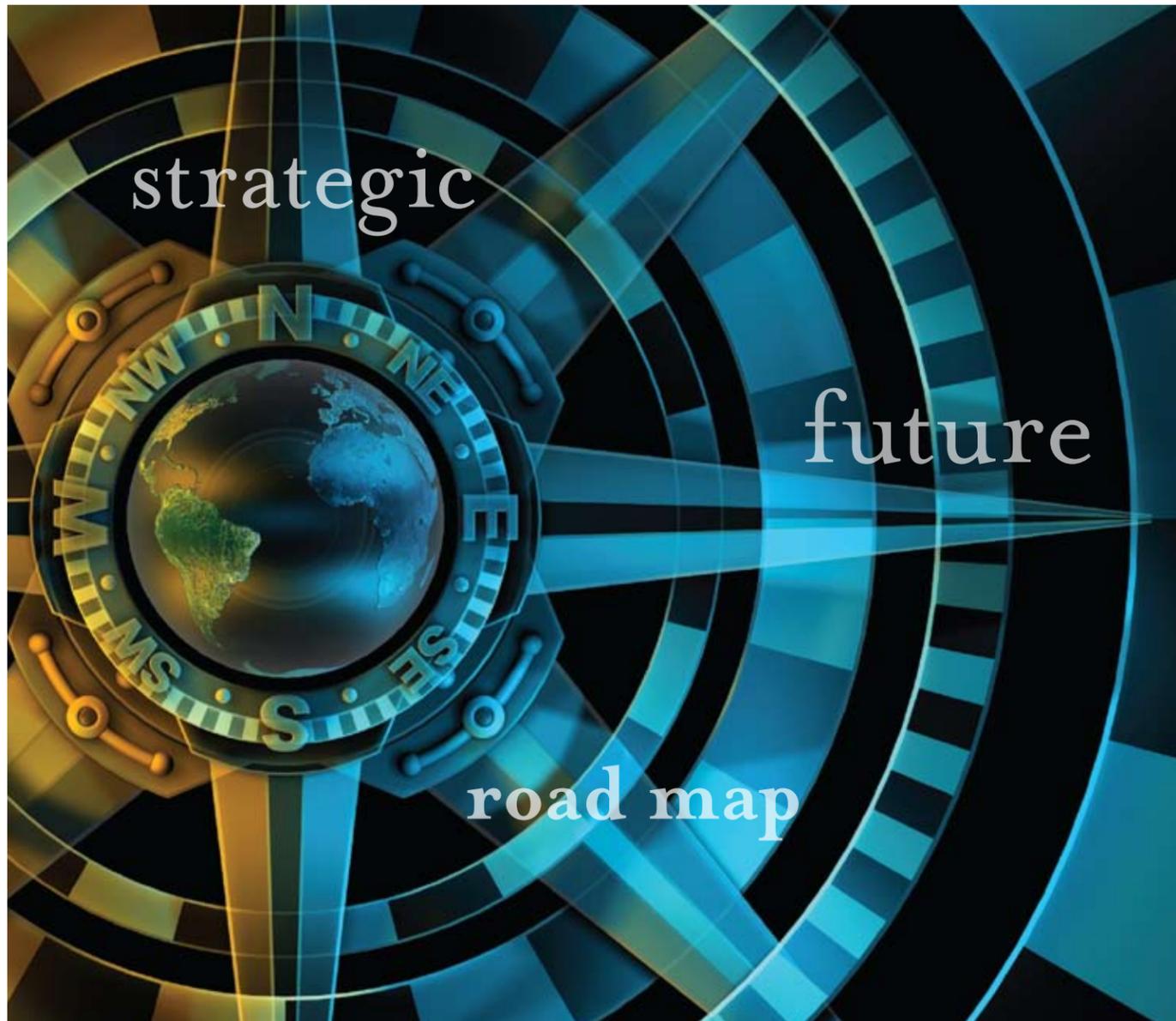


# The Lens



June 2008 Edition

Empowering Individuals  
Through Advocacy and Support



✦ Topic for Discussion

**Long Range Strategic Plan**

The Board of Directors of EITAS believes very strongly in planning for the future. For our long range strategic plan for 2008 through 2010 we have made a careful analysis of the Needs Assessment conducted in 2007; looked at the resources we have available; and examined the growing trends in state and national services. The result is a flexible road map for us to follow over the next three years. Our goals and objectives are as follows:

“The result is a **flexible** road map for us to **follow** over the next **three** years.”

Continued on page 2

✦ Topic for Discussion Continued from page 1

**Service Goals**

**1. Expand Transportation Options**

Since 2006 we have added approximately 100 riders to our service and have added new routes to reduce ride time and better accommodate the needs of our riders. We currently transport about 350 people on our buses and pay for the transport of about 100 other persons through private contractors like Yellow Cab and OATS. The cost of the private pay is considerable, with us averaging around \$800,000 a year for it. Although we can bill Medicaid for some of our transportation services, that only amounts to about \$500,000 in revenue annually. Despite this, in the past two years we have managed to reduce costs by taking the management of DOT in-house, adding drivers and buses for additional routes and moving riders from private companies to our own buses. Objectives for this Goal:

- Explore Creation of an on-demand bus or van service
- Create customized transportation system to support individuals in community employment

“The needs assessment clearly showed the desire for a wider variety of housing options”

**2. Maximize housing alternatives**

The needs assessment clearly showed the desire for a wider variety of housing options beyond the typical group home we have traditionally developed. Although some people like group home living, there is much interest in independent living programs, apartments, owning their own home, and continuing to live at home with aging parents, given appropriate supports. Objectives for this Goal:

- Host a housing summit with providers and the Regional Office to address vacant beds, referrals, and expansion plans
- Development of a plan based upon the housing summit results
- Develop new housing partnerships with current providers, HUD, Habitat for Humanity, and new providers.



Continued on page 3



**3. Address aging issues and needs of an elderly DD population**

This is a growing problem across the country that needs to be addressed. People with DD are living longer and often developing aging issues sooner than the general population. We should be looking at ways to ensure a complete continuum of proper care and assistance throughout the lifespan of the persons we serve. Objectives for this Goal:

- Outreach for partners – providers, physicians, nursing homes specializing in aging issues
- Study of national models and evidenced-based practices
- Solicit concept papers and new types of programming

**4. Improve Transition Planning Process**

We probably hear more complaints about the weakness of the current system and the gaps in information, resources, and services for parents to assist their children to transition from school into the adult world. Objectives for this Goal:

- EITAS outreach to local school districts to create closer partnerships and share resources
- Help to develop enhanced training curricula for special education programs
- Develop Resource Directory
- Enhance connections between schools, businesses and workshops

**5. Expand Community-Based Employment**

Nationally, the tradition of work opportunities through employment at sheltered workshops is diminishing. The actions of mainstreaming persons with DD in school and their community naturally spills over into a person's work life and we are seeing more and more of a demand for work opportunities beyond the workshop. In addition, traditional types of work and contracts for workshops are disappearing. How do we address these issues in a methodical and concerted effort to maintain the integrity of a long-standing workshop system, yet evolve viable additional employment options? Objectives for this Goal:

- Eitas staff develop a community employment model based on successful national practices in partnership with the workshops
- Hold a meeting with workshop directors and their board chairs to discuss the issues and problems and develop possible solutions and scenarios.
- Develop processes and contracts to initiate more community employment opportunities



**6. Develop Services and Supports to Address Behavioral Issues**

The number of people with dual diagnosis (DD and mental illness) is growing. Also, persons with DD who have occasional behavioral issues have always posed a dilemma for their caregivers as resources and services to address specific behavioral episodes or escalating mental illness issues are scarce or non-existent. Local short-term emergency hospitalizations do not often meet the individual's needs and short-term (30- 90 days) care and treatment alternatives do not exist. Objectives for this Goal:

- Develop and present specialized training for providers
- Work with community mental health centers to provide a continuum of services
- Actively support new forms and types of services

“We should be looking at ways to ensure a complete continuum of proper care”

**Funding Goals**

**1. Increasing outside funding sources**

As we explore new services (transportation, housing, aging, transition planning, community employment, behavioral supports), and initiatives either outside the scope of SB 40 funding or beyond our ability to fund within our current budget, we need to be looking at alternative sources of revenue. Objectives for this Goal:

- Explore state and federal grant opportunities
- Contract with a grant-writing specialist to support this effort
- Development of funding partnerships with providers and other statewide or local entities

**Operational Goals**

**1. Develop a Data Management System**

At present we do not have a software system that can track personal and demographic data on the individuals we serve. Objectives for this Goal:

- Contract with software developer for customized software
- Hire IT staff member to manage the new system

**2. Growth of Service Coordination**

With continued state support and funding we will proceed with the plans to eventually take over service coordination in Jackson County. Objectives of this Goal:

- Continue contract with DMH for ongoing funding and support
- Hire service coordination staff to meet caseload demands
- Develop satellite office locations as needed
- Ensure service coordination department is a profitable operation

“With continued state support and funding we will proceed”

**3. Develop Funding-Follows-the-Person Plan**

One of our original strategic planning goals was to develop the process where funding is not tied to providers, but to individuals who then have a choice of which provider to purchase services from. Objectives of this Goal:

- Create written guidelines and policies
- Work with providers to initiate the new system

**4. Become a CQL accredited agency**

As a Service Coordination provider we are required by the state to have accreditation by a national accreditation body – either CARF or CQL. Objectives of this Goal:

- Develop timeline for accreditation
- Contract with CQL to begin
- Assign staff responsibilities and oversight for accreditation

**5. Finalize all Personnel, Operational, and Board Policies and Procedures**

Complete the updating of all internal operational policies. Objectives of this Goal:

- Finalize Personnel Manual revision
- Finalize DOT Operational Manual revision
- Revise/update financial operational policies and procedures
- Create Board Policy/Procedure Manual

**6. Operationalize Board Self-Evaluation Project**

The Board self-evaluation was conducted to improve the operational and oversight capabilities of the Board and to correct any weaknesses in our governance system. Objectives of this Goal:

- Board to meet and discuss and analyze evaluation results
- Board to develop action plans to address areas in need of improvement

**7. Increase contact with Local Legislators and Political Leaders**

Executive Director and board members should be interacting more regularly with county government and state government representatives, explaining issues and actions and discussing needs. Objectives of this Goal:

- Develop presentations and handouts about EITAS
- Set up individual meetings with County legislators, local mayors, city councilmen, and state legislators
- Set up meetings with county department heads – Finance, Administration, Parks and Recreation, Auditor



**Program Updates**

**Service Coordination**

In the past month we have hired three new service coordinators – all males. One is a former service coordinator with the Kansas City Regional Office who retired from the state and came to work for us. He brings an existing caseload of clients with him. We now have seven Service Coordinators on staff, with the eighth and ninth ones to be hired in June. As of this writing we have a waiting list of over 100 clients who want to switch to our services. We are adding to caseloads of the new staff as fast as is practicable. But we do not want them to be overwhelmed during their training and orientation period. We hope to have the waiting list reduced significantly by July. For information about Service Coordination, contact Patti Phillips at 816-595-8250.

**Transportation**

We had a new Assistant Transportation Manager

begin work with us on May 5th. Gary Wilson comes to us with over 20 years experience in transportation and fleet management and is already making a positive impact on management and services at DOT. We continue to adjust routes and plan new routes that will reduce ride times and are more economical. The delivery of our three new buses has been delayed due to a manufacturer's strike. We hope to receive them by July. For information about transportation services call Bob Rice, at 816-461-3654.

**Support Services**

The Support Services Department has spent the past couple of months working with providers to enhance their outcomes for individuals and to ensure quality services and care are being provided to the individuals we fund.

For information about our Support Services,

contact Nancy Nicolaus at 816-595-8250.

**Vocational Services**

A major renovation is underway at Blue Valley Industries to expand their overcrowded lunchroom and add additional meeting space. This will drastically improve conditions for the employees there. Don Saxton, EITAS Board President, and Jake Jacobs recently met with the Executive Directors and Board Chairs of the four workshops we provide major supports to, to discuss issues such as supported and community employment as well as the future directions of sheltered workshops. The greenhouse project in conjunction with all of the workshops is well underway and bids are being taken for architectural services to develop the site plan and designs.

**Residential Services**

In May we sold our group home at 3622

Pennsylvania that had been vacated by CDD residents last summer due to accessibility issues. The new Englewood group home being built in partnership with EITAS and TNC is nearing completion and an open house will be scheduled once it is ready. Special Neighbors Inc. has approached the EITAS Board about buying some of the group homes they lease from us and contract negotiations are underway. Construction on the major remodeling and renovation of the White Oaks Group Home should be started by July 1st, with a completion date this fall.

**Day Habilitation**

The renovation of the new NOVA facility has been approved pending finalization of the agreements between NOVA and EITAS. Hopefully that will get started by July 1st.