

# *STRATEGIC PLANNING SUMMARY*

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2026 - 2029



# ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Family Service Lincoln was founded in 1891 as Lincoln, Nebraska's first charitable organization. Since then, our programs have evolved to meet the changing needs of families and to respond to current conditions within our community.

Today, Family Service Lincoln serves thousands of households each year through a broad range of services, including housing support, behavioral health therapy, expanded learning opportunities, and nutrition and food programs. Our mission "Helping Families Thrive" reflects the impact of this work across our seven program areas:



## Behavioral Health

Strengthening families and supporting youth through therapeutic services.



## Housing and Support Services

Providing coordinated resources and care to prevent housing crises and keep children safe and in the family home.



## Women, Infants and Children

Providing food benefits, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and guidance to help keep families healthy and strong.



## Youth Development

Partnering with schools, families, and neighborhoods to provide expanded learning opportunities in safe environments, while helping to build stronger communities.



## Community Crops

Providing education, advocacy, and experiences to grow local food through community gardens, production greenhouses, incubator farms, and workshops.



## Child Care Food Program

Providing training, support, and reimbursement to licensed home child care providers for serving healthy meals to promote nutrition.



## FiftyOne Commons

Providing Northeast Lincoln with affordable housing, youth development opportunities, and meaningful community spaces.



## THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

This strategic plan was developed collaboratively by Family Service Lincoln board and staff members, with input from partner agencies, elected officials, community members, and other key stakeholders. Community perspectives were gathered through a community-based survey that received 132 responses, as well as a staff focus group of 20 team members representing all six of Family Service Lincoln's program areas.

Through this inclusive process, we identified five strategic directions to guide the organization over the next four-year cycle:

## STRATEGIC PLAN IN ACTION

Family Service Lincoln's goal in this strategic planning process was to establish clear, overarching directions and goals to guide decision-making over the next four years. This plan is organized around five core areas, each of which is explored in greater detail throughout this document, along with our goals and their identified activities.

We view this strategic plan as a living document, one that will adapt and evolve over the four-year cycle. As our organization grows and changes, we anticipate refining existing goals and adding new activities within these five areas to ensure continued alignment with our mission and our needs.

These strategic directions will be implemented in multiple ways, most notably through our annual planning process and our Performance and Quality Improvement (PQI) system.




### ANNUAL PLANNING

Annual planning at Family Service Lincoln focuses on short-term planning (one month to one year) at the program and department level. At the start of each calendar year, teams identify specific goals and courses of action that align with the strategic directions outlined in this plan. Annual plans are broken into actionable steps with clear ownership, timelines, and deliverables to support accountability and progress.



### PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT



Performance and Quality Improvement (PQI) is an organization-wide system that uses data on an ongoing basis to promote efficient, effective service delivery and advance our mission and strategic goals. Through PQI, we track Key Program Indicators (KPIs) that help inform decision-making and guide when to pursue program growth, make improvements, or address areas of concern.

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## OPERATIONS

STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY



## REVENUE

DIVERSIFY AND EXPAND OUR REVENUE SOURCES



## PROGRAMS

REFINE, GROW, AND CONNECT OUR PROGRAMS



## AWARENESS

IMPROVE VISIBILITY ACROSS OUR AUDIENCES



## PEOPLE

STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT OUR WORKFORCE





## REFINE, GROW, AND CONNECT OUR PROGRAMS

Over the next four years, Family Service Lincoln will add to both the depth and breadth of its programming. This work will include evaluating the current program portfolio to ensure mission alignment, while also developing new initiatives in response to identified community needs.

### AGENCY-WIDE STRATEGIC ACTIONS

### OUTCOMES

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Evaluate the effectiveness and alignment of all program activities.</li> <li>➤ Establish clarity around our agency's impact and all program roles within.</li> <li>➤ Maintain an awareness of the impact federal changes can have on programs.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Resources and program capacity will be focused and reallocated to the most impactful areas.</li> <li>➤ All FSL programs see alignment and understand their role in accomplishing our common goal, which further informs data collection, marketing, and development.</li> <li>➤ Programming funded through HUD and other federal sources are maintained, replaced, or phased out in a way that protects clients and the agency.</li> </ul> |
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### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC STRATEGIC ACTIONS

### OUTCOMES

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Community Crops:</b> Determine the future and best uses of the Airpark Training Farm.</li> <li>➤ <b>CCFP:</b> Explore the viability of serving child care center-based programs.</li> <li>➤ <b>Housing and Support Services:</b> Evaluate the future of YHDP.</li> <li>➤ <b>FiftyOne Commons:</b> Establish FiftyOne Commons as a new agency program.</li> <li>➤ <b>SquareOne:</b> Secure the SquareOne Family Resource Center contract and establish it as a resource for our 16 county region.</li> <li>➤ <b>Day 1:</b> Continue our efforts to address family homelessness.</li> <li>➤ <b>Youth Development:</b> Determine a centralized focus and identity for the program with aligned activities, training, and practices.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The property serves as a programmatic asset and is utilized to its full potential.</li> <li>➤ Centers counter the decline of in-home providers and sustain the program.</li> <li>➤ YHDP is sustained through federal funding changes and remains an ongoing facet of the HSS portfolio.</li> <li>➤ FiftyOne Commons creates opportunities for NE Lincoln and serves as a resource for existing FSL programming.</li> <li>➤ SquareOne is established as an effective resource for families in Lincoln and the 16-county service area.</li> <li>➤ FSL is a leader in the community in efforts to make homelessness for families with children rare, brief, and one-time occurring in Lincoln, Nebraska through resource pooling, the establishment of a Common Fund, Rapid Rehousing programming.</li> <li>➤ Youth Development's high-quality programming drives increased enrollment and the establishment of waitlists and serves as a tool for staff and intern recruitment.</li> <li>➤ Youth Development programs are setting the standard for after-school and extended learning opportunity (ELO) programming in Lincoln.</li> </ul> |
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## STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Over the next four years, Family Service Lincoln will evaluate and strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of organization-wide systems and processes. Concurrently, the agency will position itself to respond strategically to emerging threats and opportunities with clarity, agility, and strong alignment to its mission.

### AGENCY-WIDE STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Create a rubric or plan for evaluating opportunities for merger or acquisition.
- Evaluate capacity across the organization, identifying gaps and planning for strategic hires as needed.
- Determine the need for additional technological investments.

### OUTCOMES

- FSL makes informed decisions about opportunities for growth through merger, while ensuring that current operations and programming remain priorities.
- Capacity of current positions is maximized and the agency becomes more effective in our service provision.
- FSL remains current with technological trends and is prepared to manage industry changes.

### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- **Housing & Support Services:** Increase our stock of rental housing to address the shortage in our community and establish revenue streams for the agency.
- **Housing & Support Services:** Secure land so that we are ready for funding opportunities such as CoCBUILDS and Shovel Ready.

### OUTCOMES

- FSL contributes to the affordable housing needs in our community, increases our assets, and develops an additional revenue stream.
- When future funding for affordable housing development is made available, for which FSL is a good fit, we will be able to apply competitively and quickly.

## IMPROVE VISIBILITY ACROSS OUR AUDIENCES

Over the next four years, Family Service Lincoln will identify and prioritize the audiences for whom marketing efforts should be most intentional. Concurrently, the agency will invest in its brand identity and related assets to ensure that the communities it serves, along with key stakeholders and partners, clearly understand who FSL is and how they can support its work.

### AGENCY-WIDE STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Finalize and act on a decision about the need to rebrand.
- Identify the audiences we are trying to reach through our marketing and awareness efforts.
- Develop and execute a marketing and community awareness campaign in line with our branding decision.
- Determine if FSL has presence across all the “right” platforms.
- Increase our efforts to educate public officials and community leaders on the importance and impact of our work.

### OUTCOMES

- FSL has a clear brand identity, clear messaging, and an organization-wide understanding of how we communicate our programs and services.
- Marketing efforts can be targeted and evaluated.
- Branding assets and changes are utilized to their fullest capacity. FSL is known and recognized by our target audience.
- FSL’s content and messaging has further reach and impact within our identified audiences.
- The agency is better known and supported within our target audiences as well as with community decision makers.

## DIVERSIFY AND EXPAND OUR REVENUE SOURCES

Over the next four years, Family Service Lincoln will strengthen its development and fundraising systems to establish a more diverse and sustainable revenue portfolio. This work will include implementing a comprehensive fund development strategy, deepening donor relationships, and fostering increased engagement and commitment from the board.

### AGENCY-WIDE STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Define a fund development strategy with a diversified revenue inclusive of individual donors, corporate sponsorships, earned revenue, philanthropic giving, and events.
- Create a case statement and key messages with stories and data to support giving opportunities and goals.
- Increase staff capacity for fund development.
- Build upon relationships with partners, stakeholders, and donors.
- Establish a plan for board giving and board outreach to donors.
- Increase unrestricted revenue to support programs.

### OUTCOMES

- Annual giving by corporate sponsorship and individual donor commitments increases. Unrestricted funds that can be used to support additional programming or cover the costs (gaps) of existing programs.
- Case statement guides development efforts and assists the Board in becoming better ambassadors for the agency. Greater awareness of the organization across the community.
- Stable development team that generates enough income to support the department and programs while building more awareness of FSL.
- Unrestricted donations increase. Donors are engaged in annual giving.
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## STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT OUR WORKFORCE

Over the next four years, Family Service Lincoln will invest in organizational culture, staff retention, and team well-being. This work will include evaluating and strengthening job satisfaction strategies, enhancing leadership training and professional development opportunities, and improving employment pipelines to fill critical positions.

### AGENCY-WIDE STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Continue staff retention efforts through higher compensation and improved job satisfaction strategies.
- Create a training plan and calendar with professional development opportunities for all positions.
- Implement a structured staff satisfaction survey and evaluation plan.
- Strengthen our inner-agency connection and awareness.
- Establish a new meeting and leadership team structure.

### OUTCOMES

- FSL can forecast with more clarity and ensure that we are competitive in the labor market, leading to increased retention and improved program delivery.
- Improved program outcomes, higher performing staff, and increased retention rates.
- Staff members are thriving as indicated on annual employee surveys.
- Staff across all programs can speak about FSL with clarity and cross-refer as appropriate.
- A higher priority is placed on staff engagement and teambuilding, resulting in a better informed and connected team.

### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- **Youth Development:** Further develop our internship program and evaluate its role as an employment pipeline.
- **Youth Development:** Solve the staffing shortage and retention issues.
- **Youth Development:** Evaluate our onboarding process and opportunities to improve.

### OUTCOMES

- The internship program of FSL serves as a pipeline for hiring and retention, as well as a community awareness resource.
- Program stabilizes, leading to increased capacity for leadership staff and higher quality experience for youth.
- Increased retention, improved cohort relationships, and improved program outcomes.