

FINAL
Adopted March 2019

Albemarle County Department of Social Services

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN
July 2019 through June 2022

Developed by the Strategic Planning Team
Prepared by Strumpf Associates: Center for Strategic Change



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INTRODUCTION

Do not follow where the path may lead, go, instead, where there is no path and leave a trail.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

This document is the dynamic blueprint for the sustainability and growth of the Albemarle County Department of Social Services (DSS), the organization responsible for meeting the complex needs individuals and families have in our community. As the population ages, as it becomes more diverse, and as the divide between rich and poor continues to grow, so do the needs of families in crisis and individuals who are seeking self-sufficiency.

This plan is the product of intensive discussions by the Albemarle County Department of Social Services' Strategic Planning Committee members and feedback from staff, partners, and stakeholders. This plan lays the foundation for the organization's business plan, which will outline key actions and resources required to execute the objectives and strategies found in this plan.

The Steering Committee recognized the need to gather input from a variety of stakeholders, including staff, service providers, consumers, and community members to create a thoughtful, strategic and actionable plan. Input was gathered by including community partners on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and facilitating focus group discussions with customers and community partners. This information was combined with research about the Albemarle County community and current service system framework to identify and prioritize areas to address. During this process, three critical issues were identified as requiring action.

Workforce Development Approaches Need Strengthening

Aligning workforce development within DSS with the County's economic development targets needs to be an intentional and strategic focus. Finding avenues through which to connect to the County's Economic Development Plan and the forthcoming Housing Plan need to be developed and sustained.

Internal Systems Need Strengthening

The organization's internal systems need to be strengthened and an intentional effort towards inclusion and diversity need to occur. Developing cultural competence toward coworkers and customers will impact staff turnover as well as customer satisfaction. We are committed to sharing values of diversity and inclusion to achieve and sustain excellence. We firmly believe that we can best promote excellence by recruiting and retaining a diverse group of staff and by creating a climate of respect that is supportive of their success.

External Communication Efforts are Inadequate

Key stakeholders, other community-based organizations, and the general public do not have adequate information about the spectrum of services or the opportunities to be engaged as collaborative partners. As a result, people who are eligible may not be receiving services and misconceptions about the organization reduce the opportunities to strengthen systems and partner effectively. We attribute some of this to staff turnover and internal communication.

The Planning Committee is to be commended for their imagination, dedication, and perseverance throughout this process. We have a vision of where we want to be, an assessment of where we are now and a set of criteria to measure our progress. We have defined the values that describe how we do business and developed strategies and priorities to move us from where we are to where we want to be.

The strategic direction, goals and strategies included in this plan are a response to our understanding of what our customers value most about the service delivery system, and current opportunities and challenges for offering a high-quality system of services to the community.

Stanford's Center on Poverty and Inequality's 2017 annual "State of the Union" report found profound and persisting inequalities in the United States. The report details the "profound racial and ethnic inequalities that persist in many domains," notably in housing, employment and health. The report points out that since 1980, racial and ethnic disparities in poverty in the U.S. have remained largely unchanged, resulting in what the researchers characterize as "two Americas."

During the three-year period of this strategic plan we will increase our leadership role in developing talent through data analytics, working to remove racial, ethnic and geographic disparities in the county, and by being proactive in creating partnerships that can catalyze opportunities. We will actively engage with our communities to create opportunities for our customers to gain skills and resources required to become self-sufficient.

In Albemarle County, as in the nation, there is an ongoing and growing scarcity of skilled workers to meet the demand. The economy of Albemarle County is vital and growing. The predominant economic sectors are services, manufacturing, education, retail, tourism, trade, care and social assistance, technical and professional services and agriculture. The County of Albemarle's labor force is roughly 53,000 and its unemployment rate of 2.6% is consistently lower than the state and national averages. According to the Virginia Employment Commission, the number of jobs by 2024 will grow by over 10% among all industries. Employers continue to report consistent difficulty in filling their job openings.

With a fresh perspective on the mission, understanding what we do well, and the environment in which we operate, DSS will pursue the following three bold goals:

- **By 2022** DSS will increase the number of individuals who obtain employment in the County's targeted industries by 50%, from 150 to 300.
- **By 2022** DSS will increase diversity within our own services and management level workforce (on a variety of factors such as gender, race, ethnicity) by 30%, from 30 to 39.
- **By 2022** DSS will decrease staff turnover by 50%, from 20 to 10.

This Strategic Plan priorities and objectives encompass all DSS's activities. However, a plan is of little value by itself. This document is the framework to continue our growth and ensure the sustainability of our high-performance, customer-focused service delivery system that continues to benefit all stakeholders – our customers, our employees, our partners, and the community.

The demand is great, as is our commitment to serve our customers and our community with a strategy for our time that will meet the needs of today's changing environment.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION: Individuals and families in Albemarle County are able to meet their full potential and plan for the future.

MISSION: We provide and engage individuals in services that enable self-sufficiency and support individual and family safety and well-being.

VALUE PROPOSITION: We listen to your needs and we work with you to find solutions.

CUSTOMERS: Our *primary external customers* are individuals and organizations who use our services and those who are in need of services.

Staff are our *internal customers*.

ROLE: The Department will play several roles in furtherance of our vision and mission:

- We will be an **advocate** for the people we serve.
- We will endeavor to **catalyze change** in the community.
- We will be **stewards** for the safety and security of our customers.
- We will be a **community facilitator and convener**.

**ORGANIZATIONAL
CORE VALUES**

Our Common Values:

We believe in the following shared principles, beliefs and priorities....

EQUITY AND INCLUSION. We believe that it is our collective responsibility to address exclusionary and unjust practices through our work and in our workplace.

HOPE. We will work in ways that instill hope by opening doors to opportunity.

OPPORTUNITY. We bring to bear all of our talents and resources to provide opportunities for our customers and our staff to succeed and thrive.

RESPECT. We share and show esteem, appreciation and acceptance of diversity and treat all individuals with honor and dignity.

SELF DETERMINATION. We recognize that individuals are responsible for their own development and have the freedom to choose.

The Department's core values support Albemarle County in its commitment to

Integrity: We value our customers and co-workers by always providing honest and fair treatment.

Innovation: We embrace creativity and positive change.

Stewardship: We honor our role as stewards of the public trust by managing our natural, human and financial resources respectfully and responsibly.

Learning: We encourage and support lifelong learning and personal and professional growth.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS 2019-2022

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS

- Improve the customers experience and self-sufficiency opportunities.
- Enhance department performance.

To support these strategic priorities, we have established the following **BOLD GOALS**

- **By 2022** DSS will increase the number of individuals who obtain employment in the County's targeted industries by 50%, from 150 to 300.
- **By 2022** DSS will increase diversity within our own services and management level workforce (on a variety of factors such as gender, race, ethnicity) by 30%, from 30 to 39.
- **By 2022** DSS will decrease staff turnover by 50%, from 20 to 10.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES and KEY STRATEGIES

The following goals and objectives support the Department in accomplishing the Bold Goals over the next three years.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Increase the number of DSS customers who obtain employment in high demand, high growth, high wage industries targeted by the County.

Outcomes by 2022:

- Increase the number of businesses providing workbased learning opportunities by X%.
- Increase the number of customers that obtain industry recognized certifications and/or credentials by X%.

Key Strategies:

- 1.1 Strengthen workforce development strategies for DSS participants that link education and career pathways¹ to increase employment opportunities in the County's targeted sector and ensure that workers have the skills needed to fill current and emerging high wage/high demand jobs.
- 1.2 Expand reach across the Department to identify those who may be 'work ready' or need work to help them get skills and find employment.
- 1.3 Establish methods to address life circumstances that become barriers to employment, such as housing, transportation, and childcare.
- 1.4 Increase funding for rental assistance and the capacity to provide such assistance.
- 1.5 Establish strong linkages with post-secondary institutions to align programming with career pathways and labor market demand.
- 1.6 Promote registered apprenticeship programs and work with organizations to place DSS customers in apprenticeship programs.
- 1.7 Build a highly efficient job placement infrastructure through alignment of local public and private services.
- 1.8 Customize the service delivery processes to meet the needs of young adults and adults without a high school diploma or GED.

¹ Career pathways are defined as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved (as well as other criteria).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Increase diversity of the DSS workforce.

Outcomes by 2022:

- The diversity in the number of candidates for posted job openings increases annually by X%.
- Staff report an increase in cultural humility and responsiveness among their coworkers on an annual staff workplace climate survey.

Key Strategies:

- 2.1 Identify and leverage culturally responsive and anti-racism work already being done in the county.
- 2.2 Create a deliberate and welcoming culture and environment where all different kinds of people will thrive and succeed.
- 2.3 Develop a top-to-bottom business strategy for diversity and inclusion as opposed to delegating this as an HR program alone.
- 2.4 Create a culture where every individual contributes their full potential by investigating the systems and processes within DSS to uncover sore spots and blind spots and find ways to reimagine them.
- 2.5 Establish methods to constantly question organizational assumptions and biases and work to address those that negatively impact diversity and inclusion.
- 2.6 Focus efforts in services and management as the least diverse areas of the organization.
- 2.7 Establish methods that actively search for and recruit from underrepresented groups on a continuous basis.
- 2.8 Become more culturally responsive in how services are designed and delivered.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Increase DSS staff retention.

Outcomes by 2022:

- Jurisdiction wide status from the state is obtained.
- Increase external customer satisfaction by X%

Key Strategies:

- 3.1 Pursue and obtain jurisdiction wide status from the state.
- 3.2 Develop and articulate promotional opportunities within the Department and the career ladders available.
- 3.3 Develop strategies to retain workers beyond 3 years.
- 3.4 Examine and set staffing standards at all levels within the organization
- 3.5 Reduce the time from onboarding a new employee to their obtaining a level of proficiency that allows them to work independently.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The following principles define the way the organization operates with regard to the goals and strategies identified. The core processes employed by the organization to accomplish the goals will operate in the following fashion. The County's 8 Business Operating Principles are designated where they match the Department's.

DSS Operating Principles	Albemarle County 8 Business Operating Principles
We collaborate to build strategic alliances around our goals, strategies and tasks in which we are engaged.	Designate ownership of systems and processes. Systems and processes that have shared ownership have mutual accountability for collaborating to ensure effective results.
We align and maximize all resources required to carry out our strategic initiatives and seek to increase our resources as required to achieve our mission.	Organizational business systems and process optimization takes precedence over individual and department preferences Create a business case for the initiation of business systems, including life cycle costs and needed resources to ensure the successful implementation and maintenance of a business system.
We continuously ensure our strategies meet changing needs and expectations of our customers and the marketplace.	Business systems and processes meet customer needs and are transparent, readily understandable and customer friendly. When there are competing interests, we consider the interests of public stewardship a priority.
We deliver service excellence through all our products, processes and services.	Strive for common processes and practices across the organization that minimize exceptions and maximize the use of our resources. Maximize integration and alignment across systems and processes
We develop strategies embedded in research and best practice information to become a knowledge-rich learning organization.	Ensure that employees can embrace the system or process through effective communication and engagement, training, tools and support.
We use Continuous Quality Process Improvement strategies to ensure our strategies meet changing expectations of our customers and the market place.	
We use the CQI principle of data-driven decision-making in the operational end of all systems and processes.	Establish performance measures to evaluate results of intended outcomes of key business systems to drive process improvements and resource decisions
We conduct ongoing evaluation to continuously assess the outcomes and appropriateness of programs and delivery systems for which we will hold ourselves accountable.	
We continuously strengthen organizational effectiveness and build capacity.	
We embrace and strive to meet the County's One Organization philosophy.	

MEASURING RESULTS:

Overall Measure by 2022 as a result of the strategies put in place:

- Increase the number of individuals who obtain employment in the County's targeted industries by 50%, from 150 to 300.
- Increase diversity within our own services and management level workforce (on a variety of factors such as gender, race, ethnicity) by 30%, from 30 to 39.
- Decrease staff turnover by 50%, from 20 to 10.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL DATA SNAPSHOTS

Population

- As of July 1, 2017, the population estimate was 107,702. The population has grown by slightly under 9% since 2010.
- 5.3% were persons under 5 years of age.
- 20.1% were persons under 18 years of age.
- 17.8% were persons 65 years and over.
- 52% of the population was female.

Ethnicity

- The population of the County is primarily white, at 81.7%.
- 9.8% of the population is Black or African American alone.
- 5.8% is Hispanic or Latino alone.
- 5.4% is Asian alone.
- 2.6% are two or more races.

Income and Poverty

- Median household income (in 2017 dollars) was \$72,265
- Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2017 dollars) was \$39,273
- In 2017, 7.9% of the population was living in poverty.

Housing

- Owner-occupied housing unit rate was 63.6%.
- Median value of owner-occupied housing units was \$329,600.
- Median gross rent was \$1,189.

Education

- 91.4% of people age 25 years or older were high school graduates or higher.
- 52.3% of those age 25 or older have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Source: Census Bureau: QuickFacts: Albemarle County, Virginia

Economy

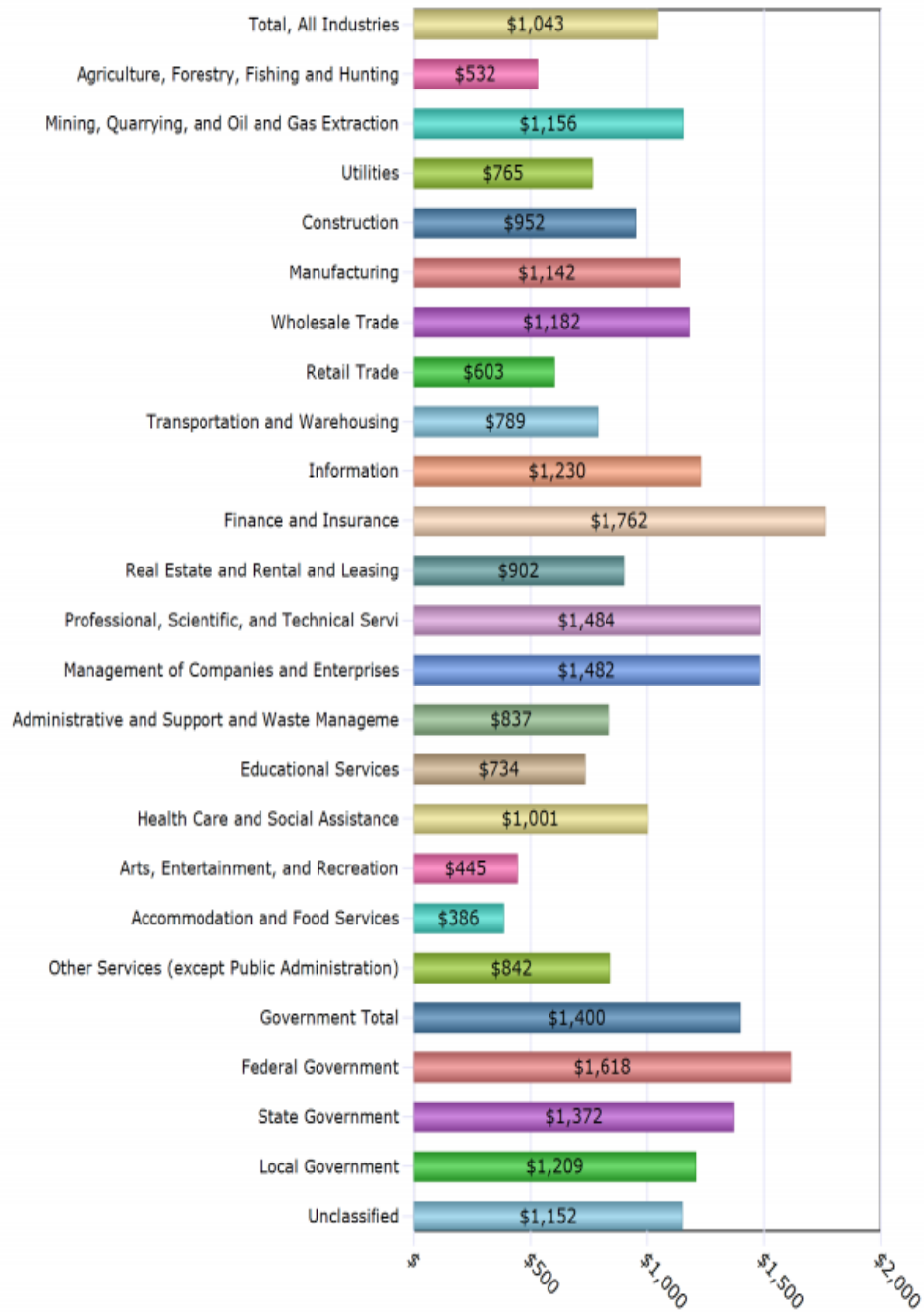
- In 2017 the unemployment rate for the County was 3.3%, compared to 3.7% for the state and 4.4% for the United States. (*Source: Census Bureau*)

50 Largest Employers

1. University of Virginia / Blue Ridge Hospital
2. County of Albemarle
3. Sentara Healthcare
4. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance
5. U.S. Department of Defense
6. University of Virginia Medical Center
7. Piedmont Virginia Community College
8. Atlantic Coast Athletic Club
9. Crutchfield Corporation
10. Wal Mart
11. Northrop Grumman Corporation
12. Wegmans Store #07
13. FIC Systems
14. Farmington Country Club
15. Thomas Jefferson Memorial
16. Pharmaceutical Research Association
17. Boar's Head Inn
18. Aramark Campus LLC
19. Westminster Canterbury of the Blue Ridge
20. Hanover Research Council
21. GE Fanuc Automation North Corporation
22. Crown Orchard Company
23. Region Ten Community Services
24. Food Lion
25. Gretna Health Care Center
26. UVA Health Services Foundation
27. University of Virginia Healthsouth LLC
28. U.P.S.
29. Faulconer Construction Company
30. FIC Staff Services
31. Lowes' Home Centers, Inc.
32. Piedmont Airlines
33. VDOT
34. Harris Teeter Supermarket
35. Belk
36. Senior Living Service
37. Costco
38. Hospice Of The Piedmont Inc
39. Kroger
40. Rosewood Village Associates
41. State Farm Fire and Casualty Insurance
42. Pepsi Cola Bottling Center
43. The Laurels Of Charlottesville
44. Seminole Trail Management LLC
45. Microaire Surgical Instruments
46. Target Corp
47. Price Chevrolet Company
48. UVI Staffing LLC
49. The Covenant School
50. MTE & Associates Inc

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Economic Information & Analytics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 3rd Quarter (July, August, September) 2018.

Average Weekly Wage by Industry



Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Economic Information & Analytics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), 3rd Quarter (July, August, September) 2018.
Virginia

As of October 2018, the County's draft Economic Development Strategic Plan for 2019-2022, called **Project ENABLE: Enabling A Better Life Economically** identified a list of targeted sectors. The plan states: *The list of target sectors is a list of optimal targets and should not be considered to exclude related sectors. It is critical to emphasize that the Target Industry Study supports the cultivation and nurturing of existing businesses and considers employment of current residents as its most important outcome. The targets were selected based on available workforce, alignment with community preferences, and growth potential as well as strong multiplier effects that create jobs across a broad spectrum of skill sets.*

The recommended target industries are:

- Bioscience and Medical Devices
- Business & Financial Services
- Information Technology and Defense & Security
- Agribusiness and Food Processing

Complementary targets are:

- Health Services
- Arts, Design and Sports & Media