



Strategic Planning Summary 2021 - 2026



OUR MISSION

is to promote and encourage public well-being; provide homeless prevention resources to those living in poverty and threatened with homelessness; to help citizens survive and exit homelessness; and to expand opportunities and empower people to be self-sufficient in east-central Iowa cities and counties.

Introduction

Jennifer Walker (ECIA) facilitated the planning and goal setting process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify to determine the Mission Statement of the organization, identify the issues and trends in east-central Iowa in relation to Article III of the CSEI Articles of Incorporation; identify some of the programs/initiatives that the CSEI board would like to see addressed in the next 2-3 years; and seek suggestions as to how the Board of Directors can work better together.
2. Prepare a report of all suggested initiatives and programs based upon the comments of the Board of Directors.
3. Conduct a strategic planning and goal setting session with the Board of Directors.
4. Preparation of this final report.

Goal Setting Work Session

The Board of Directors met for a work session that was facilitated by ECIA on July 22, 2021. Six members of the board, including the president, and vice-president, as well as CSEI manager, Holly McPherson, were asked to do the following:

1. Finalize the group's Mission Statement. (See Above)
2. Review the list of most important issues and trends facing CSEI in 2021, as listed by the Board of Directors.
3. Indicate the initiatives and programs that are the most urgent or important at this time that should be addressed by CSEI.
4. Indicate what major project should CSEI focus on and what projects are currently happening through CSEI.
5. Provide comments and suggestions regarding teamwork objectives.

Issues and Trends

Review the list of most important issues and trends facing CSEI in 2021, as listed by the Board of Directors.

- Public Awareness for CSEI issues and populations
- Drug and Alcohol addiction
- Mental Health issues
- Unemployment
- Needed workforce training
- Homelessness
 - Shelter for all variations of individuals and families, including pets
 - The “invisible homeless” – those that don’t enter the system, that are unknown and invisible to the public
 - Homeless services (shelter _ wrap-around) for those in rural areas
 - Gaps in services for populations not covered by existing programs
 - Need for affordable housing
 - Financial stability for homeless initiatives -- funding
 - Limited definition of homelessness
 - Doubled-up living arrangements, especially for families
- COVID-19 effect on the population served

Initiatives and Programs

The Board of Directors identified the following initiatives and programs as the most urgent or important:

- Support for existing agencies which are currently serving homeless populations.
- Finding housing and improving quality of life for those we serve.
- Work in partnership with organizations focused on addressing the brain health needs of our community and their relationship to homelessness.
- Additional funding for the Permanent Supportive Housing program and continued partnerships with local landlords.
- Continue to pursue and secure funding from existing agencies for quality, affordable housing.

Major projects to focus on in the next two years

The Board of Directors identified the following initiatives and programs as the most urgent or important:

- Explore the need for housing services in areas outside of Dubuque through referrals and focus groups.

- Explore housing for families.
- Locate buildings that could be turned into shelter for the homeless or to house services.
- Work to provide housing and rental assistance to those in need.
- Continue to provide street outreach by meeting people in need where they are to help them connect with services and resources.
- Continue to develop public awareness campaign to better inform people about homelessness in our region.

Team Building Agreements

The Board of Directors reviewed a list of ideas and suggestions relating to team building and building a better working relationship.

- Provide Board of Directors with ongoing education regarding from other providers to know what is already being done, which in turn, will better enable CSEI to know where they can be most useful.
- Stay current on information regarding homeless issues and be involved in ongoing efforts in the community.
- Secure additional funding to carry out the CSEI mission. There are never enough dollars to cover the needs in the area we serve.
- Keep Board aware and informed of the needs and shortfalls as clearly as possible.

Other Comments/Concerns

- CSEI can become a valuable resource in educating the greater community on homeless issues.
- The Board of Directors needs more information on the number of people who truly need our services.
- Making the public aware of what obstacles face homeless persons and giving them some numbers that are facing these challenges.

Future Planning Suggestions

It is recommended that the Board of Directors prepare an action plan for the Major Projects. The action plan for each goal would define the steps needed to accomplish the various tasks or objectives. Once approved by the Board, the action plan could then be made part of the Goal Setting Report.

It is recommended that the Board of Directors review the list of Major Projects to monitor the progress that is made on each item on an annual basis. The Board could use a format that shows the project or item side-by-side with a comment that updates to the group on the progress that has been made on each item at the end of each fiscal year.

It is important to note that the projects and various initiatives are not "cast in stone." The list can be modified as new circumstances may dictate. Hopefully, the Board of Directors will repeat this process in the coming years, which may result in some additional modifications.

Communication of the Board of Director's Goals and Objectives to the Public

The following is a brief summary of various activities that have been used by municipalities and nonprofits to communicate the organization's goals and objectives to the public.

1. **Website.** After the Board has reviewed and formally adopted the Strategic Planning Summary, a copy of the report can be placed on the CSEI page of ECIA's website.
2. **Newspaper Article.** The Board could request that the local newspaper publish a list of the CSEI's goals and objectives.
3. **Open Houses.** Annual "open houses" at a CSEI board meeting could be held to inform the partners and interested citizens about the upcoming projects and programs that have been proposed.
6. **School Board Meetings.** The Board of Directors should schedule annual meetings with the School Board to review and discuss the CSEI's goals and objectives. These meetings could also provide an opportunity to learn more about the projects, programs, and objectives under consideration by these similar organizations.
7. **Presentations to Service Clubs.** Board members or CSEI staff could make brief presentations to local services clubs and organizations outlining the goals and objectives.