Highlights from the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan
Introduction

During its early years, the purpose of Jewish Family & Children’s Service was simple: giving temporary financial relief to the poor and needy. More than 150 years later, JF&CS remains true to its historical mission while helping individuals and families facing a broad range of challenges throughout the lifecycle. As community needs and funding opportunities have changed over time, so too have JF&CS’s capabilities and resources, with new programs arising at the intersection of emerging needs and the organization’s evolving capacity to respond. Today’s JF&CS is the vibrant product of these dynamics, with a broad array of programs serving people of all ages and backgrounds.

Throughout its long history, JF&CS has flourished by successfully adapting to changing times while maintaining its core values and commitments. As we look to the future, JF&CS is once again facing changes that call for a new approach to advancing our mission. To help the organization navigate the road ahead, JF&CS engaged in an intensive strategic planning process during the spring and summer of 2018, supported by the Monitor Institute by Deloitte.

Our Mission

Jewish Family & Children’s Service cares for individuals and families by providing exceptional human services guided by Jewish traditions of social responsibility, compassion, and respect for all members of the community.

JF&CS fulfills its mission by providing direct services and advancing best practices that support the resilience and well-being of its target populations: new parents and their children, older adults and family caregivers, children and adults with disabilities, and people experiencing poverty, hunger, or domestic abuse.
Vision

By 2021, JF&CS will build the resilience and well-being of its target populations by providing a financially sustainable portfolio of programs that work together to amplify the organization’s impact. While responding to the immediate needs of those who come to us for assistance, we will offer support that fosters lasting change and, whenever possible, improves the trajectory of participants’ lives.

To extend the organization’s impact beyond the individuals and families we engage with directly, we will also pursue opportunities to advance the fields in which we work, drawing on our capacity to serve as conveners, collaborators, and thought leaders while maintaining a primary focus on serving local communities.

JF&CS will blend charitable, fee-for-service, and publicly funded programs to ensure the organization’s long-term financial viability and to preserve philanthropic support for those who could not otherwise access the help they need. The same quality of care will be provided to all participants, regardless of ability to pay.

A consistent set of criteria will guide decisions to add, grow, or discontinue programs. We will ground these decisions in clearly articulated intended impact and financial goals for each program or service, with attention to the distinct role each may play in the overall portfolio.

To provide a warm and welcoming environment for all, we will cultivate an attitude of cultural humility – that is, eagerness to learn about the experience and cultures of participants and staff from diverse backgrounds and commitment to organizational change that promotes equity and inclusion. At the same time, we will honor our strengths and commitments as a Jewish organization, addressing needs in the Jewish community and engaging the community in our work.

Recognizing that our impact is ultimately dependent on the quality of our staff, we will continue to be an employer of choice at every level of the organization, investing in human resource practices as needed to maintain this core strength.
Values

These enduring agency values and beliefs guide what JF&CS does and how we do it.

1. We believe in the inherent dignity of every individual at every stage of life.
2. We believe in addressing the needs of the whole person as a means of achieving meaningful, sustainable change.
3. We believe in the power of human connection to support resilience and well-being.
4. We believe in empowering participants by addressing inequities and building skills as we provide needed assistance.
5. We strive for integrity, transparency, responsiveness, and accountability in all that we do.

Our work is also guided by Jewish traditions of

- **Tzedakah** (charity) as an expression of social justice,
- **Chessed** (loving kindness),
- **Tikkun olam** (repairing the world), and
- **Hachnasat orchim** (welcoming the stranger) by supporting people in our society who have been marginalized or oppressed.

Organizational Strengths and Challenges

This strategic plan builds upon and amplifies JF&CS’s signature strengths – assets that equip the organization to navigate the challenges ahead. These include:

- Long history of successfully addressing community needs and adapting to change.
- Ability to develop and extend new approaches to meeting the needs of our target populations.
- Extensive collaborative relationships with local and national organizations.
- Intentional integration of programs to address interrelated participant needs.
- Strong base of volunteer and philanthropic support from the Jewish community.
- Unique role in serving the Jewish community through programs like Family Table, Schechter Holocaust Services, and our Jewish Life programs for people with disabilities.
- Exceptional staff members known for their expertise, responsiveness, intellectual curiosity, field leadership, mutual support, commitment to providing quality services, willingness to “go the extra mile” for participants, and eagerness to collaborate internally and externally.

Dignity

*n. the state or quality of being worthy of honor or respect.*
Changes in the operating environment, as well as internal factors identified during the strategic planning process, combine to create the challenges that this plan is designed to address. These include:

- Anticipated loss of Medicaid revenue as the Massachusetts Medicaid program is restructured under Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs).
- Decline in unrestricted giving across the non-profit sector.
- Increased competition for philanthropic support from single-issue organizations.
- Public-sector contracts and unit rates that do not cover direct and indirect expenses associated with providing services.
- Longevity of staff – a strength that is also a challenge as several staff members in key positions are approaching retirement age.

**Strategic Priorities**

Over the next three years, JF&CS will pursue the following strategic priorities, which build upon organizational strengths, address current challenges, and support the two imperatives of this plan: maximizing the organization’s social impact and ensuring its long-term fiscal viability.

1. **Program Alignment**

Using analytical tools developed as part of the strategic planning process, we will regularly assess how our programs work together to ensure the financial sustainability and impact of the organization as a whole. Informed by program performance data and environmental trends, this process will bring consistency and rigor to decisions to add, grow, modify, or discontinue activities. The process will also guide efforts to consolidate and strengthen cross-division capabilities – such as goal-oriented case management – that support resilience and well-being across the lifespan.

2. **Integration and Collaboration**

We will continue to pursue internal integration of JF&CS programs and strategic collaboration with other organizations to address the needs of the whole person. This priority is in keeping with enduring agency values and best practices for serving people facing multiple, interrelated challenges.

Collaboration has long been a strength of JF&CS, as demonstrated by more than 300
active relationships with other providers. Moving forward, we will continue to establish innovative partnerships designed to meet participant needs that JF&CS’s internal capacities do not address.

To support organizational focus and increase managerial efficiency, we will seek to collaborate with other providers before considering the addition of new programs to address unmet participant needs. New programs will only be added when internal capacity is in participants’ best interests or when we can secure sustainable resources to fill a gap in services that other providers are not addressing.

3. Data Collection and Utilization

We will continuously improve our collection, analysis, and use of program data to advance the efficacy, efficiency, and sustainability of our efforts. Moving forward, we will ensure that all data collection is rooted in clearly articulated intended impact and theory of change at the program, division, and organizational levels – which will help us use collected data to improve outcomes and secure funding from new sources. Data collection practices will also ensure that the voices of those we serve are factored into our analysis of outcomes and our efforts to deepen impact.

4. Disciplined Growth

As we improve the financial sustainability of our ongoing programs, we will pursue targeted opportunities for revenue growth that are aligned with our intended impact. We will continue to pursue multi-year federal grants, building on our recent success in this area, and will increase private-pay revenue in programs that can compete for private-pay market share. These efforts will generate a more balanced mix of revenue sources and reduce organizational reliance on any single source of income.

To increase focus and efficiency over the next three years, we will prioritize expansion or enhancement of existing programs over launch of new programs. Any new ventures will be assessed for alignment and undertaken as pilots, with clear benchmarks that must be met before adopting the program as an ongoing venture.

5. Proactive Decision Making

As MassHealth restructuring continues to unfold, JF&CS management will work closely with the Board of Directors to develop and adopt contingency plans for accommodating the anticipated loss of Medicaid revenue and contribution margins over the next three years. A close partnership of Board and Management, and clear decision-making processes, will support organizational stability as we adjust to the changes ahead.
6. Enhanced Philanthropy

During 2019-2021, the development team will focus on growth in four key areas: 1) multi-year restricted and unrestricted proposals for gifts over $100,000 from individual, corporate, and foundation funders; 2) planned giving; 3) third-party events for specific initiatives; and 4) engaging with the Greater Boston business community to leverage increased corporate support.

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Lewis Pearlson, Member
Andrew Pearlstein, Committee Chair
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About JF&CS

For more than 150 years, Jewish Family & Children’s Service has been helping individuals and families build a strong foundation for resilience and well-being across the lifespan. Through an integrated portfolio of more than 40 programs reaching communities throughout Eastern and Central Massachusetts, JF&CS focuses on meeting the needs of new parents and their children, older adults and family caregivers, children and adults with disabilities, and people experiencing poverty, hunger, or domestic abuse.

Caring for Generations

JF&CS is a leading provider of comprehensive human services, delivering personalized and integrated care that improves people’s lives.

Visit jfcsboston.org or call 781-647-JFCS (5327).