

SOUTHERN MARYLAND TRI-COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE, INC.



STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2027

Approved by Southern Maryland Tri-County
Community Action Committee's

Board of Directors on February 27, 2024



THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION

“Community Action changes people's lives,
embodies the spirit of hope, improves
communities, and makes Southern Maryland
a better place to live.”



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Agency Profile	5
Community Needs Assessment Key Findings	6
Customer Satisfaction Results and Input	6
Efforts to Combat Poverty and Revitalize Communities	7
Mission, Vision, and Core Values	11
Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA)	12
SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results)	13
Strategic Priorities	13
National Community Action Goals and ROMA Goals	14
SMTCCAC's Strategic Goals	14
Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Expected Outcomes, and Metrics	15
Implementation and Evaluation	22-23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee (SMTCCAC) facilitated an in-person strategic planning retreat on January 12, 2024 to determine the new direction that will guide its work over the next three (3) years. The Agency's strategic planning process began in November 2023 and was completed in January 2024 when SMTCCAC's tripartite Board of Directors approved the outcome-driven plan. It is important to note that a well-rounded group of SMTCCAC's internal stakeholders (board members and staff) participated in important strategic discussions about the Agency's future.

SMTCCAC contracted a qualified consulting firm to facilitate its strategic planning process. The President and Chief Executive Officer of the firm has more than 25 years of experience in writing, implementing, and overseeing community action strategic plans.

SMTCCAC's strategic planning process began with internal stakeholders completing an electronic or hard copy workbook that was developed to gather intentional data for the plan. Utilizing the strategic planning workbook assisted with enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the process, while also maximizing the time spent at the in-person strategic planning retreat.

SMTCCAC utilized a Certified Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Trainer and the ROMA framework in developing its strategic plan. During implementation of the plan, the use of ROMA will provide an opportunity for SMTCCAC to measure, analyze, and communicate its performance. Additionally, SMTCCAC will be committed to generating robust results for individuals, families, and communities. Data collected and analyzed from assessment through evaluation of the ROMA cycle will help identify successes and challenges, making use of the information for continuous quality improvement and agency-wide planning.

The resulting plan meets the strategic planning requirements of the mandated Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standards. SMTCCAC's strategic plan clearly and concisely documents compliance to the following performance management standards:

STANDARD 6.2

The approved strategic plan addresses reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities, and empowerment of people with low incomes to become self-sufficient.

STANDARD 6.3

The approved strategic plan contains family, agency, and/or community goals.

STANDARD 6.4

Customer satisfaction data and customer input, collected as part of the community assessment, is included in the strategic planning process.



Standard 6.1 was met when SMTCCAC's Board of Directors approved the strategic plan. Standard 6.5 will be met in the future when regular strategic updates are provided to the Board of Directors and documented in board minutes.

SMTCCAC implemented the following steps in facilitating its strategic planning process:

GATHERING DATA

SMTCCAC conducted a self-assessment as well as revisited its mission, vision, and core values. After detailed discussions, the group decided to make some revisions to the mission, vision, and core values. There were also conversations about changing SMTCCAC's name to Southern Maryland Community Action Agency, Inc. The gathering data step also included a review of the SMTCCAC's most recently completed Community Needs Assessment (CNA) that highlighted key findings.

Additionally, a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) Analysis was conducted to obtain valuable information about the current environment at SMTCCAC.

ANALYZING DATA

This interactive step included conducting a detailed analyzation of all the gathered data. As a result of the analysis, the following six strategic priorities were identified: **1)** Affordable and quality early childhood educational services; **2)** Need for safe and affordable housing; **3)** Additional grant funding and financial resources; **4)** Recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce sufficient to achieve goals and outcomes; **5)** Professional development and capacity-building for internal stakeholders; and **6)** Expansion of partnerships and community collaborations.

The planning group used the gathered data to develop family, agency, and community goals that are directly tied to SMTCCAC's Community Needs Assessment. It is important to highlight that SMTCCAC's strategic goals are related to the three national community action goals and six ROMA goals.

STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 1

SMTCCAC will provide high quality and outcome-driven early childhood education services for children and their families. **(Family Goal)**

GOAL 2

SMTCCAC will provide opportunities that assist individuals and families with achieving stability and enhancing quality of life. **(Family Goal)**

GOAL 3

SMTCCAC will implement intentional strategies to improve overall operation and organizational capacity to achieve outstanding outcomes. **(Agency Goal)**

GOAL 4

SMTCCAC will collaborate with residents and establish partnerships to improve community conditions. **(Community Goal)**



AGENCY PROFILE

On January 8, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson announced his War on Poverty by introducing legislation that would expand the federal government's role in poverty reduction efforts. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 created the framework for community action agencies to help fight America's War on Poverty. Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc. (SMTCCAC) was established as a private nonprofit in 1965 in response to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.



The County Commissioners for Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties designated SMTCCAC as the official recipient of Economic Opportunity funds in 1965 after an application for a federal grant was submitted by the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland on behalf of the agency. The agency's first funding was a \$94,115 federal grant; \$9,415 of which was a local match.

Community Organization and Neighborhood Youth Corps were the first programs to emerge when funding was approved and five employees were hired. Upon receiving additional funding in 1967, the program's Head Start and Emergency Food and Medical Services took shape, along with the Family Movement Independence Demonstration Project. By 1981, there were 12 programs under the umbrella of SMTCCAC, Inc.

Approximately 60 years after its inception, SMTCCAC's services and resources are designed to combat poverty and promote economic self-sufficiency. Periodic needs assessments are conducted to determine the need for certain services, improvements needed, and gaps in services. Programs implemented by SMTCCAC; Inc. include the following:

- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Career Training Program for Class B Commercial Driver's License
- Housing Counseling
- Affordable Rental Housing
- Housing Opportunity Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
- Internship Program
- Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Friendly Health Services

SMTCCAC is accountable to and governed by a qualified Board of Directors. The agency has dedicated and compassionate employees who thrive on providing outstanding customer service and impactful programs that improve lives and promote family self-sufficiency. SMTCCAC provides assistance to approximately 15,000 individuals each year and has an annual funding level of more than \$8,500,000.

SMTCCAC's Community Needs Assessment (CNA) Key Findings

Limited access to high quality education

- Low-income households struggle to access quality education due to financial constraints and other barriers in access to education. This has a long-term effect on individuals' prospects for employment and socioeconomic mobility and replicates generational cycles of poverty.
- For example, the rates of children that are considered to be ready for school are lowest in the county (Charles) that has the highest poverty rate. Charles County also has the lowest percentage of children that are meeting third grade achievement levels. Charles County has the highest rate of adults without a high school diploma which illustrates how poor access to early childhood education, lack of achievement in elementary and high school, and limited adult educational attainment impacts future socioeconomic success and educational attainment.
- Residents in all three counties experience a high cost of living that has been fueled by a growth in the number of individuals moving from the Metro Washington D.C. area to more affordable. The counties with the lowest rates of educational attainment also have the highest poverty rates and there is a racial disparity in educational attainment.

Lack of affordable housing

Affordable housing is a significant concern for individuals and families living in poverty. High housing costs, particularly in more urban areas of Charles County, have led to housing insecurity and overcrowded living conditions. At the same time, housing costs have increased due to rising incomes in the service area. These factors can be linked to the social determinants of health and wellbeing, particularly in relation to substance abuse and mental health. Since 2010, the rate of homeownership has increased in Calvert and St. Mary's County and decreased in Charles County. The rates of individuals that rent their housing has increased and decreased correspondingly in each county.



Housing challenges and needs of residents in the area include barriers in accessing homeownership programs due to high incomes and an inability to meet credit and down payment requirements, substandard living conditions, and a high rental and homeownership cost burden. Concurrently, the service area has less affordable housing than other areas in the United States and Maryland.

- For example, in each county around 40% of rental homes are not affordable for individuals earning the median income for where they live.
- The housing challenges and needs that are experienced to some degree in all counties include a need for housing stability, lack of affordable housing, and increasing home prices. Among renters, 44% experience a cost burden in Calvert and Charles County and 38% of renters in St. Mary's County experience a cost burden.

Unemployment and low-wage jobs

Limited job opportunities or the prevalence of low-wage jobs make it challenging for individuals to secure stable employment and earn a sufficient income to meet their basic needs. Overall, the rates of unemployment throughout the service area are slightly lower than for Maryland and the United States. The five-year unemployment rate indicates that other than during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a year-over-year decrease in unemployment that is consistent with national trends. However, in 2023, unemployment is on the rise.

The unemployment rate is

2.5%

in Calvert County

3%

in Charles County

2.8%

in St. Mary's County

Comparatively, the rate of unemployment
among Head Start parents is

8%.

Limited access to healthcare and racial and socioeconomic disparities in the social determinants of health

- Access to affordable healthcare services is a barrier for people in poverty.
- Lack of health insurance coverage and the limited availability of healthcare can result in inadequate medical care which impacts the life span and the quality of life for those in poverty.
- The service area health care provider to low-income resident ratio for dentists, physical health, and mental health care professionals is higher than the ratio for Maryland which indicates that people have more limited access to health care.
- Data reflecting community wellbeing factors also indicates that the number of providers is an issue, however transportation barriers also limit access to services.
- In addition, the large percentage of the population that receives Medicaid also impact access to health care services because some providers will not accept public insurance as payment.

Adverse early childhood experiences and family challenges

The rate of child abuse in the service area is rising in Charles and Calvert County and it has decreased in St. Mary's County. The family challenges reported in court filings demonstrate children are exposed to adverse early childhood experiences. For example, in 2019-2020 there were two filings for domestic violence in Calvert County, 27 cases in Charles County and no cases in St. Mary's County. It is likely that due to the pandemic, rates of domestic violence were underreported. There is also a concern with child access, which means there is family conflict in which one parent restricts another from access to their children. In 2020, there were 96 child access cases in Calvert County, 177 in Charles County, and 95 in St. Mary's County.

The social determinants of health, along with other persistent barriers and historical oppression, contribute to lower rates of life expectancy among people of color in all three counties. In Calvert County, the life expectancy for whites is 79.5 years compared to 76.7 years for black residents. In Charles County life expectancy is 77.5 years for whites and 76.8 years for blacks, in St. Mary's County, life expectancy is 78.5 years for whites and 74.1 years for blacks. Immunization rates can also illustrate the rate at which different racial groups access preventive care. Among whites, the flu vaccination rate was higher for whites and higher among residents as a whole in all three counties than for black residents.

KEY FINDINGS



FOOD INSECURITY

Some individuals and families in poverty experience food insecurity, meaning they lack consistent access to enough nutritious food to lead a healthy life. The percentage of the population living in a food desert has decreased since 2010 in all counties in part, due to pandemic assistance. The number of children eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Meals (FARMS) has also increased in all counties during the past five years which indicates rising food insecurity among families, but also reflects the trend for schools to provide free meals to all children when a school is in a high-poverty census tract. The data has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic which obscures rising rates of food insecurity as pandemic relief assistance is falling away.

In general, children have higher rates of food insecurity than adults. In Calvert and Charles County, over 40% of the low-income population lives in a census tract with no access to healthy food compared to just 16% of Maryland's population. In St. Mary's County, 23% of the low-income population lacks access to food. Obesity is also an issue. Within the service area, the rate of adults that participate in no physical activity is 19% in Calvert County, 24% in Charles County (which experiences the highest rates of obesity), and 21% in St. Mary's County.

Limited transportation options

In areas with inadequate public transportation individuals without access to private vehicles find it difficult to commute to work, school, or healthcare appointments, limiting their opportunities. Southern Maryland's unique geographic location limits its connections to the rest of Maryland.

- Low-income households struggle to access quality education due to financial constraints and other barriers in access to education. This has a long-term effect on individuals' prospects for employment and socioeconomic mobility and replicates generational cycles of poverty.
- In all service area counties, less than 5% of the population lacks access to a vehicle which contributes to high rates of congestion along highways and roads.
- The lack of commuter infrastructure has led to increased travel time for individuals to travel to work. In Calvert County over 17% of workers travel more than 60 minutes to work and in Charles County more than 33% of workers travel at more than 60 minutes to work, compared to just 15% of Maryland residents.
- There has also been a gentrification occurring where low-income residents are pushed to more rural areas that lack transportation as housing costs increase. In these areas transportation can be more limited or non-existent.

KEY FINDINGS



Childcare Accessibility is limited as evidenced by a significant childcare slot gap in each county and lack of affordable childcare options.

- The service area has adequate preschool slots to meet the demand for early care and education for children aged three to five years. Additionally, the area has a significant number of home visiting programs serving pregnant mothers and children aged from birth to-three years.
- The early childhood system can serve 100% of preschool-aged children in public programs and less than 10% of all infants and toddlers. There are gaps in care that are matched to family needs in relation to the affordability of child care and lack of child care subsidies which makes accessing the care needed for all families to engage in work activities challenging.
- There are significant staffing challenges impacting early childhood programs in the service area. The rate of expansion of state preschool is pressing an already challenging situation and staffing crisis.
- The wages in the service area are also increasing at the same time as more positions are becoming available, making it difficult to attract and retain staff. It is recommended that SMTCCAC explore redesigning the program in response to family and community needs and reallocate existing funds to salary costs so that SMTCCAC staff can achieve parity with staff working in similar roles in other programs.
- Data from the United States Department of Labor and local school districts note a significant wage gap between Head Start and state preschool wages. In addition, local schools plan to hire an additional 28 assistant teachers in the next year which will further press the system. The local schools also plan to hire an additional 12 preschool teachers.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RESULTS AND INPUT

SMTCCAC is dedicated to obtaining customer input into the types of services that are provided for families and individuals in its service area. The Agency continues to allow low-income representatives to serve on its tripartite Board of Directors. SMTCCAC also ensures that customers' input and feedback are captured in both the Community Needs Assessment and customer satisfaction process.

The Community Needs Assessment and customer satisfaction surveys completed by low-income individuals are collected, analyzed, and utilized by SMTCCAC in its planning efforts as follows: 1) Assists the agency to determine the needs that will be addressed with funding; 2) Ensures the effective prioritization of assistance that will be implemented; and 3) Provides an opportunity for review and assessment in order to make modifications to the service delivery as needed.

SMTCCAC is committed to providing a positive experience and outstanding customer service to its customers, both external and internal. The Agency realizes the importance of treating all customers with respect and desires to exceed its customers' expectations. The overall customer satisfaction results consistently show that customers are satisfied with the services that they receive at SMTCCAC.



EFFORTS TO COMBAT POVERTY AND REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES

SMTCCAC developed four strategic goals that will position the agency to effectively address family, community, and agency needs. To help combat poverty, SMTCCAC's Board of Directors approves a Community Action Plan annually as outlined in the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Organizational Standards. The Community Action Plan highlights a comprehensive approach that includes various components working together to ensure effective operation, service delivery, coordination, linkages, and meeting gaps in services.

The Community Action Plan also sets agency-wide targets and expected outcomes, while also summarizing the work SMTCCAC will complete through National Performance Indicators (NPIs). SMTCCAC will use internal resources from all of its programs and establish mutually beneficial partnerships to provide a holistic approach to services for individuals and families. SMTCCAC's ultimate goal will be to improve communities, combat poverty, and promote self-sufficiency.



MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES



MISSION

SMTCCAC's mission is to offer services that improve upward mobility, reduce conditions of poverty, and enrich quality of life.



VISION

SMTCCAC's vision is to create opportunities for all residents to realize their potential to become self-sufficient.



CORE VALUES

OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE:

Treat everyone with respect and always be committed to exceeding expectations in every encounter with SMTCCAC.

INTEGRITY:

Be honest, build trust, and consistently exhibit moral standards and ethical principles in all business matters.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Promote an agency-wide culture of accountability and show transparency in programmatic and financial affairs.

EXCELLENCE:

Maintain a high level of quality in service delivery and overall operation.

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY:

Be dedicated to assessing and understanding community needs, while also effectively collaborating with partners to provide impactful services and programs.

OUTCOME-DRIVEN:

Develop intentional approaches that will accomplish goals that lead to achieving and reporting robust outcomes.

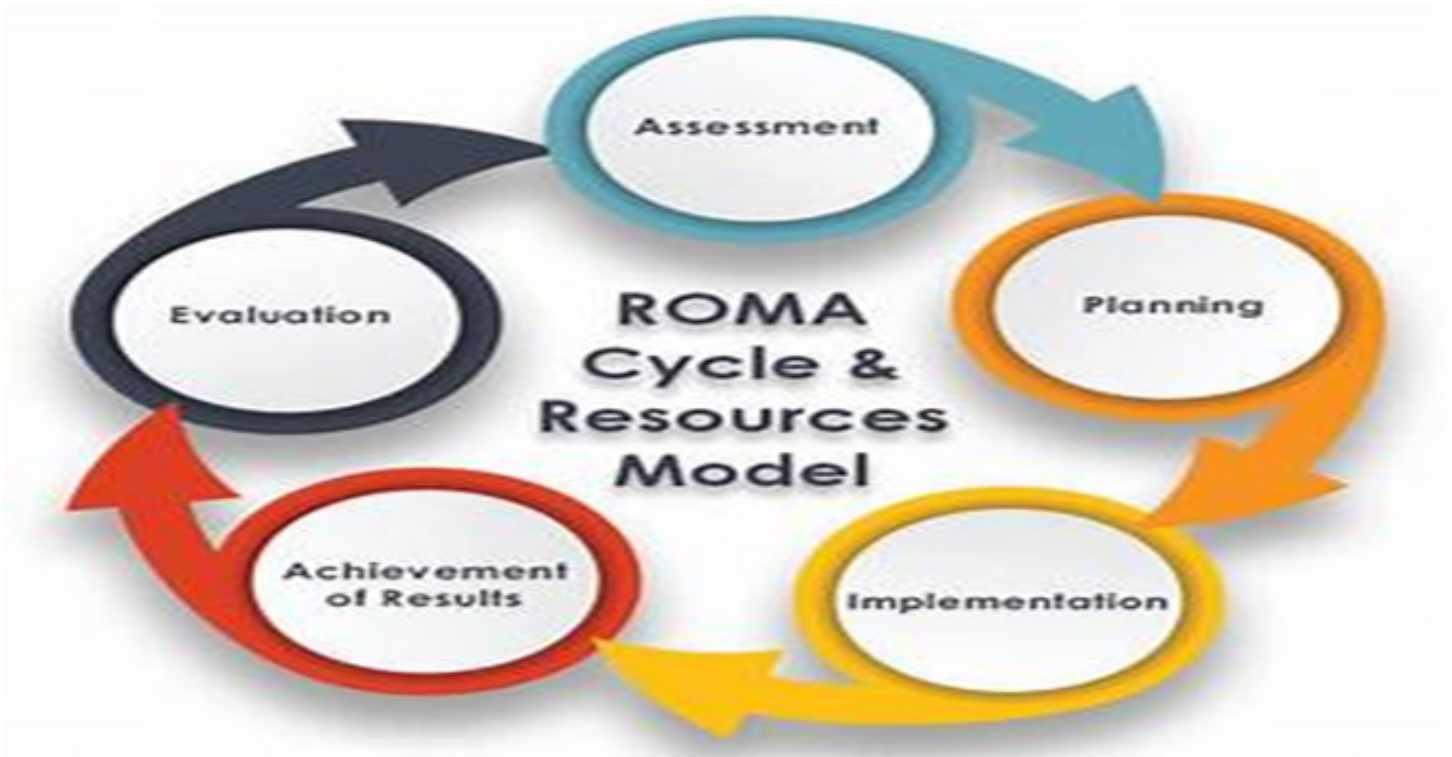
RESULTS ORIENTED MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (ROMA)

SMTCCAC used the ROMA framework in developing its strategic plan.

ROMA will also be utilized by SMTCCAC as follows during the implementation of the plan:

- To help SMTCCAC generate robust outcomes for the agency, individuals, families, and communities in its service area.
- For continuous quality improvement to enable SMTCCAC to measure, analyze, and communicate performance.
- To help SMTCCAC focus on continuous learning and improvement, while also achieving results-oriented outcomes.
- To build on ROMA principles and practices to support SMTCCAC as it gathers and uses data at all points of the ROMA cycle.

Data will be collected and analyzed documenting use of the ROMA cycle (assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation) to identify successes and challenges. ROMA will make use of information for continuous quality improvement and intentional planning. SMTCCAC will implement ROMA agency-wide and remain dedicated to strategic review and analysis, while also developing forward-thinking approaches for delivery of services and combating poverty



SOAR AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR)

A SOAR analysis was conducted to assist SMTCCAC in determining its current strengths and vision in order to develop strategic goals. The SOAR engaged internal stakeholders of SMTCCAC to obtain valuable information. This process also focused on current practices to enhance what is presently done well, rather than focusing on perceived threats or weaknesses. The SOAR included an analysis of internal and external factors in the environment that could directly or indirectly impact SMTCCAC's future success.

The SOAR highlighted several strengths for SMTCCAC: 1) Commitment to agency mission and serving vulnerable individuals and communities; 2) Longevity in the service area; 3) Compassionate leadership with dedicated staff; 4) Impactful workforce development opportunities; 5) Effective services that transition individuals out of poverty; 6) High-quality early childhood education; 7) Focus on the 2-Generation Approach that assists whole families; 8) Implementation of an application process that can serve residents virtually and in-person; 9) Community input and engagement from low-income individuals via participation in the customer satisfaction and Community Needs Assessment process; and 10) Strong partnerships and community collaborations.



Additionally, the SOAR included strategic conversations on opportunities that SMTCCAC can benefit from in order to plan and execute strategies to become more effective. SMTCCAC will be committed to swiftly recognizing opportunities, grasping them whenever they arise. The SOAR also examined aspirations and results for SMTCCAC. The planning group determined six priorities for SMTCCAC that were based on the SOAR and strategic discussions. Then, the priorities were utilized to develop goals, objectives, action plans, expected outcomes, and metrics.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Affordable and quality
early childhood educational
services

Need for safe and
affordable housing

Additional grant funding
and financial resources

Recruitment and retention
of a qualified workforce
sufficient to achieve goals
and outcomes

Professional development
and capacity-building for
internal stakeholders

Expansion of
partnerships and, community
collaborations

ROMA Goals, Community Action National Goals, and SMTCCAC Strategic Goals

The goals outlined in SMTCCAC's Strategic Plan are related to the National Community Action and ROMA Goals.

ROMA GOALS

GOAL 1

Low-income people become more self-sufficient. **(Family)**

GOAL 2

The conditions in which low-income people live are improved. **(Community)**

GOAL 3

Low-income people own a stake in their community. **(Community)**

GOAL 4

Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved. **(Agency)**

GOAL 5

Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results. **(Agency)**

GOAL 6

Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems. **(Family)**

NATIONAL COMMUNITY ACTION GOALS

- Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
- Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
- People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.



SMTCCAC'S STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 1

SMTCCAC will provide high quality and outcome-driven early childhood education services for children and their families. **(Family Goal)**

GOAL 2

SMTCCAC will provide opportunities that assist individuals and families with achieving and enhancing quality of life. **(Family Goal)**

GOAL 3

SMTCCAC will implement intentional strategies to improve overall performance and organizational capacity to achieve outstanding outcomes. **(Agency Goal)**

GOAL 4

SMTCCAC will collaborate with residents and establish partnerships to improve community conditions. **(Community Goal)**

FAMILY LEVEL GOAL

GOAL 1

SMTCCAC will provide high quality and outcome-driven early childhood education services for children and their families.

Objective 1.1

Ensure that children show improvement in all areas of learning and development.

Objective 1.2

Provide family development resources that improve quality of life and overall well-being.

Objective 1.3

Develop opportunities for parents/guardians to enhance knowledge, develop skills, and participate in family engagement activities.

ACTION PLAN

Ensure that children show improvement in all areas of learning and development.

- Utilize high quality and research-based curriculum to ensure that all classrooms offer developmentally-appropriate instruction that provides an enriched and inclusive learning environment.
- Provide instruction and advocate for resources that foster improvement in social and emotional development, language and literacy, cognition, perceptual, motor, and physical development and approaches to learning.
- Conduct periodic monitoring as well as review and analyze curriculum fidelity, teacher/child interactions, child assessment, and individualization reports to promote continuous quality improvement.
- Complete child observations, classroom assessments, and continually utilize data for intentional planning and evaluation to increase child outcomes.
- Provide coaching and professional development for teachers based on individual and specific needs identified as a result of classroom observations and selected monitoring tools.

Provide family development resources that improve quality of life and overall well-being.

- Implement the 2-Generation whole family approach to improve the entire family unit.
- Provide a family development component that is centered around effective coaching, collaborative goal-setting, and impactful case management.
- Provide a comprehensive approach to service delivery that connects families to resources and programs that stabilize households, promote economic security, and enrich overall quality of life.
- Provide internal and external referrals that connect families to needed resources/services that achieve both child and family outcomes.
- Continually advocate for resources and services that improve the lives of children and their families.

Develop opportunities for parents/guardians to enhance knowledge, develop skills, and participate in family engagement activities.

- Partner with families to identify and utilize resources to help them have an enriched quality of life.
- Provide opportunities for parents/guardians to volunteer, participate on committees, and attend trainings.
- Provide resources and training opportunities to meet the needs of families, inclusive of but not limited to, health, nutrition, mental health, and financial literacy to improve family well-being.
- Provide education opportunities to show parents the connection between inadequate nutrition and negative health and dental issues for children.
- Increase family engagement strategies to assist with recruitment efforts.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Head Start/Early Head Start children will demonstrate continuous improvement in growth, development, and learning.
- Head Start/Early Head Start children will improve mental and physical health.
- Head Start/Early Head Start families will demonstrate an improvement in parenting skills.
- Head Start/Early Head Start staff will improve skills through professional development and coaching.
- Head Start/Early Head Start families will demonstrate enhanced functioning skills.

METRICS

- The number of children who demonstrated improved development and learning.
- The number of parents/guardians participating in center activities, parent meetings, trainings, and other programs sponsored by Head Start and Early Head Start.
- The number of parents/guardians who improved their home environment.
- The number of Head Start/Early Head Start families who achieved stability and self-sufficiency.

GOAL 2

SMTCCAC will provide opportunities that assist individuals and families with achieving and enhancing quality of life.

Objective 2.1

Connect families to housing resources and supportive services that help them achieve stability and improve overall well-being.

Objective 2.2

Provide individuals with assistance that remove barriers to obtaining employment and achieving economic security.

ACTION PLAN

Connect families to housing resources and supportive services that help them achieve stability and improve overall well-being.

- Provide emergency assistance and/or supportive services to stabilize vulnerable households.
- Assist individuals with paying electric and heating bills.
- Provide assistance with home energy costs to prevent a disruption in services.
- Provide housing counseling and services/resources to prevent homelessness.
- Provide assistance to help individuals obtain and/or maintain safe, affordable housing.
- Provide financial counseling with a focus on preserving home ownership and promoting financial education.
- Facilitate first-time homebuyer educational workshops.
- Provide medical assistance and supervision for the elderly and disabled in a warm and friendly environment via the Friendly Health Services program.
- Support food pantries in order to distribute food to qualified, low-income households who experience food insecurity throughout the three-county service area.
- Provide person-centered case management services that offer comprehensive support and guidance to individuals and families navigating social services, while also empowering residents to achieve their goals, enhance their well-being, and improve their overall quality of life.
- Provide referrals to connect individuals and families to needed resources.

Provide individuals with assistance that remove barriers to obtaining employment and achieving economic security.

- Implement a comprehensive and holistic approach to services for the whole family.
- Offer workforce development opportunities that help individuals and families achieve economic independence.
- Provide program participants with a case manager to assess their needs, set goals, and create a specified case plan that is designed to address barriers to self-sufficiency such as employment and training.
- Continue to enroll individuals in the Career Training Program for Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Program.
- Provide employment services (skills training and opportunities, job search, post-employment supports and supplies) that assist individuals with obtaining and maintaining employment that pays a living wage.
- Provide community services that remove barriers to economic independence.
- Continually seek resources and grants to start new, innovative programs as well as expand the number of individuals who are enrolled in the CDL Program.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increase the number of individuals who obtained skills and/or employment.
- Increase the number of individuals who obtained or maintained stability.
- Increase the number of individuals who maintained by independent living situation.
- Reduce the number of individuals who experienced food insecurity.
- Reduce the number of individuals who experienced homelessness.

METRICS

- Number of unemployed adults who obtained employment up to or exceeding a living wage.
- Number of individuals who obtained a recognized credential, certificate, or degree relating to the achievement of educational or vocational skills.
- Number of individuals who obtained safe and affordable housing.
- Number of individuals who avoided evictions.
- Number of individuals who received utility assistance.
- Number of individuals and families who participated in food pantries.
- Number of seniors who received services to maintain an independent living situation.

AGENCY LEVEL GOAL

GOAL 3

SMTCCAC will implement intentional strategies to improve overall performance and organizational capacity to achieve outstanding outcomes.

Objective 3.1

Recruit and retain a qualified workforce sufficient to achieve goals and outcomes.

Objective 3.2

Obtain additional grant funding and financial resources.

Objective 3.3

Provide professional development and capacity-building opportunities for internal stakeholders.

Objective 3.4

Enhance marketing and branding efforts to improve community awareness and visibility.

Objective 3.5

Improve facilities and technology resources.

ACTION PLAN

Recruit and retain a qualified workforce sufficient to achieve goals and outcomes.

- Develop a list of all vacant positions by department and implement timeline to fill those positions.
- Require the Human Resources Department to advertise vacant jobs within one week of receiving the resignation letter or an individual being terminated.
- Develop partnerships and community collaborations to assist the agency with obtaining a qualified pool of applicants to fill positions.
- Encourage participants from all programs to apply for positions that they are qualified for.
- Strategically advertise and sponsor job fairs throughout the entire service to obtain a workforce sufficient to achieve SMTCCAC's mission and operate the agency.
- Remain committed to obtaining additional resources to provide competitive pay to retain qualified staff.

Obtaining additional grant funding and financial resources.

- Continually submit grant applications to private foundations, state and national businesses, local government, the State of Maryland, and federal government.
- Seek funding to implement new and innovative programs.
- Secure grant funding to enhance the CDL Program to support long-term independence.

Provide professional development and capacity-building opportunities for internal stakeholders.

- Design and disperse a survey to determine training needs for staff and board members.
- Develop an annual training plan that is based on survey results.
- Provide regular professional development, capacity-building, and educational resources for staff and board members as outlined in the training plan.

Enhance marketing and branding efforts to improve community awareness and visibility.

- Develop a comprehensive marketing and branding plan to include additional community engagement, becoming more active on social media platforms, as well as informing individuals, funding sources, elected officials, and the community-at-large about SMTCCCAC, its results, and outcomes.
- Assign agency-wide marketing and branding planning duties to SMTCCCAC team member.
- Participate in and develop community events, activities, and outreach throughout the entire services, specifically in underserved areas and locations.
- Develop a SMTCCCAC public relations packet for staff and board members.

Improve facilities and technology resources.

- Review technology infrastructure to determine if upgrades and/or additional resources are needed.
- Develop agency-wide technology improvement plan.
- Assess all facilities and develop an action plan that prompts the enhancement of facilities that could include upgrades/modifications and relocation of sites and offices as needed and based on available resources.
- Seek financial resources and grants to enhance technology resources and facilities.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increase financial revenue and grant funding.
- Improve community awareness and visibility.
- Enhance professional development and capacity-building opportunities provided for staff and the Board of Directors.
- Decrease the number of vacant staff positions.
- Improve technology resources.
- Enhance current facilities and/or relocate sites and office locations as needed.

METRICS

- Number of professional development and training opportunities provided for staff and the Board of Directors.
- Number of community events participated in.
- Number of engagements and posts on social media platforms.
- Total amount of new revenue obtained via grants and fundraising.
- Number of technology upgrades or improvements.
- Number of facility enhancements.
- Number of new hires at SMTCCCAC to fill vacant or newly created positions.

COMMUNITY LEVEL GOAL

GOAL 4

SMTCCAC will collaborate with residents and establish partnerships to improve community conditions.

Objective 4.1

Provide opportunities for residents to participate in activities and programs that improve community conditions.

Objective 4.2

Engage in regular advocacy to enhance services and resources available for individuals and families.

Objective 4.3

Increase and strengthen partnerships and community collaborations.

ACTION PLAN

- Provide information to residents on how to advocate for resources and how to be effective while serving on advisory councils and boards.
- Encourage SMTCCAC team members to serve on local boards and advisory councils to better advocate for services and resources for vulnerable individuals and neighborhoods.
- Review existing partnerships agreements and determine the type of new community collaborations that are needed to bridge the gaps in current services and foster innovation and outcomes in new programs.
- Actively participate in local events, fairs, and community gatherings to demonstrate SMTCCAC's commitment to being part of the community.
- Provide volunteer opportunities for community members to actively contribute to SMTCCAC's mission.
- Encourage community members to share their ideas or concerns and continue to participate in SMTCCAC's Community Needs Assessment and customer satisfaction process.

Expected Outcome

Enhance partnerships and community collaborations.

Expected Outcome

Increase participation in community outreach, activities, and events.

Expected Outcome

Provide civic engagement opportunities for residents to increase skills or knowledge that will improve community conditions.

METRICS

- Number of low-income individuals who obtained skills or knowledge to improve the communities in which they live.
- Number of community initiatives developed or participated in.
- Number of outreach activities and events developed in various neighborhoods and communities.
- Number of individuals attending outreach and community events.
- Number of additional partnerships and new community collaborations.
- Number of volunteer hours donated.

IMPLEMENTATION

SMTCCAC will implement a comprehensive implementation strategy that includes the staff and Board of Directors working as a team to accomplish the goals, objectives, and expected outcomes that are outlined in its strategic plan. Staff will perform work-related duties to provide assistance/services to customers and utilize available funding as outlined in its Community Action Plan. SMTCCAC managers will align the program specific operating plans, the Community Action Plan, and approved budgets to accomplish the four strategic goals.



SMTCCAC will proceed as follows in implementation efforts: 1) Ensure that all internal stakeholders have a mission-driven mindset that is dedicated to accomplishing results-oriented outcomes; 2) Develop mutually beneficial partnership agreements and continually seek community collaborations to obtain additional resources/services for individuals, families, and communities; 3) Effectively implement a service delivery model that includes comprehensive case management and direct services to assist families with achieving stability and improving overall well-being; and 4) Develop an agency-wide commitment to continuous quality improvement and professional development.

It is important to highlight that all programs operated by SMTCCAC develop operating plans each year to guide the work that will be completed. Additionally, SMTCCAC prepares a Community Action Plan that outlines the National Performance Indicators that the agency will target and services/activities that will be provided. SMTCCAC's President/CEO will assign strategic goal oversight to the leadership/management team who will provide regular progress reports as needed.

EVALUATION

The Executive Committee of SMTCCAC's Board of Directors will oversee the execution of the Agency's strategic plan. The Board will receive quarterly strategic updates and conduct a review every six months that references goals, objectives, and outcomes achieved. Progress reports will be shared at board meetings and with SMTCCAC's executive leadership and management team. The Agency will utilize the ROMA framework to evaluate its achievement of strategic goals. Additionally, SMTCCAC will complete the following steps:

STEP 1

Design a strategic plan report based on the approved plan.

STEP 2

Provide quarterly strategic planning reports to the Board of Directors. (Organizational Standards 6.5)

STEP 3

Complete reviews by tracking progress, challenges, and accomplishments of goals and outcomes.

STEP 4

Facilitate an annual meeting to review strategic accomplishments and challenges.

STEP 5

Recommend annual strategic updates and adjustments that will enhance effectiveness. (Organizational Standard 9.3)

STEP 6

Revise the plan as needed if there are significant changes to the environment.

SOUTHERN MARYLAND TRI-COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE, INC.



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