



COUNTY OF SONOMA

Human Services Department

Enrich and Uplift, Together.

2025-2027 Strategic Roadmap Report





COUNTY OF SONOMA

Human Services Department

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

**THE HSD VISION IS THAT PEOPLE IN OUR
COMMUNITY LIVE FREELY CHOSEN LIVES
UP TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL
THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFESPAN.**



Dear Colleagues,

Human services departments across the U.S. are navigating complex and rapidly evolving challenges, including shifting economic and political landscapes, changing demographics, advancements in technology, social media and new communication methods. In Sonoma County, these challenges have been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating natural disasters our community has endured, including multiple wildfires and floods. These events have disproportionately impacted our most vulnerable populations, including communities that identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), highlighting the critical need for an equity-centered approach in our service delivery.

The Sonoma County Human Services Department (HSD) faced an unprecedented surge in demand for benefits and assistance, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. From January 2020 to January 2024, the number of residents receiving Medi-Cal increased substantially, growing from 56,000 to nearly 75,000. In these recent years, HSD programs have served as many as 137,000 individuals per month, or 28% of the total Sonoma County population. Today, 1 in 4 Sonoma County residents receive a service from HSD.

Given the increasing need for services, and recognizing the ongoing challenges posed by economic instability, public health crises, and climate-related disasters, HSD has developed this Strategic Roadmap to ensure we remain responsive and resilient. This Roadmap is not just about maintaining the quality of our services but about reimagining them through a lens of racial equity and justice, ensuring that all residents, particularly those most affected by systemic inequities, receive the support they need to thrive. In 2023, we initiated the Roadmap process by gathering input from HSD staff. We also explored evidence-based human services models that enhance capacity, collaboration, client outcomes, and community impact.

As we move forward, we are committed to continuously integrating feedback from our staff. The Roadmap is designed to be a living document, guiding our work over the next three years and evolving as we develop new strategies and objectives. We welcome your thoughts as we embark on this journey together.

Sincerely,

Angela Struckmann
Director, Sonoma County Human Services Department

VISION, MISSION, & VALUES

VISION

People in our community live freely chosen lives up to their full potential throughout their lifespan.



MISSION

Building upon strengths, we bridge people to opportunity through responsive safety net services.

VALUES

PARTNERSHIP

- We demonstrate an inherent responsibility to others by building relationships and seek mutual understanding of the needs of those with whom we collaborate with.
- We exhibit a commitment to shared goals.

RESPONSIVENESS

- We are purposeful in getting feedback and meaningfully incorporate information to improve services and outcomes.
- We demonstrate a willingness to implement change to improve quality.

DIGNITY

- We demonstrate genuine curiosity and interest in an individual's situation and circumstances through listening with intent to understand and without judgment.
- Interactions reflect a positive regard and an acceptance of people as they are.

HUMILITY

- We demonstrate a desire to learn from others and a commitment to incorporating diverse ideas and perspectives.
- We recognize when we make a mistake and course correct accordingly.
- We reflect an awareness of power and privilege and strive to be inclusive and transparent with each other and those we serve.

BELONGING

- We create an environment in which people can be authentic, express their needs and perspectives safely, and feel connected.
- We are proactively inclusive, recognize the uniqueness and strengths of others, and value all contributions.

INTEGRITY

- Our words and actions are in alignment with adopted values.
- We are dependable, work to maintain public trust, and carry out our work consistent with requirements and expectations.

COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY



HSD acknowledges the deep-rooted inequities disproportionately affecting people who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in our community, across areas like housing, health, and education. As part of our commitment to becoming an antiracist organization, HSD is focused on eliminating racial disparities in all programs, policies, and services.

In 2020, the HSD Racial Equity Committee (REC) was established to create a brave space for authentic collaboration. In partnership with the Planning, Research, Evaluation, and Engagement (PREE) team, HSD conducted a Race Equity Survey in 2021. The REC provided input on the survey, shaping how results were shared with staff to ensure transparency while mitigating potential harm to BIPOC employees. The survey results have since guided the work of various HSD Divisions' Race Equity workgroups and informed department-wide strategies.

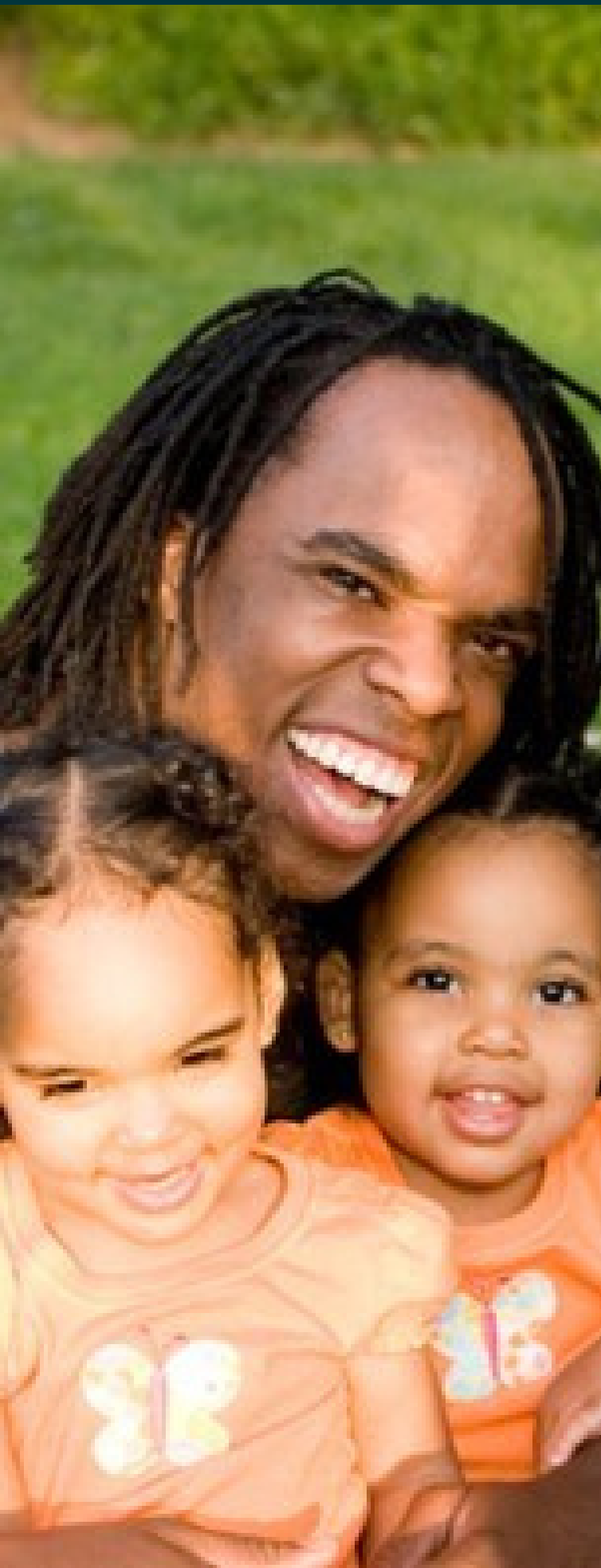
These insights continue to guide our efforts to dismantle systemic racism. The REC also played a key role in the development of HSD's Strategic Priority Area 1: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Through two racial equity retreats, the Committee worked closely with Execs, HSD's Office of Equity staff and Core Team members to foster relationships and strategize long-term goals. Monthly racial equity discussions are now facilitated with Execs, ensuring the conversation remains open and evolving within the department as we work towards building an antiracist organization.

In 2023 and 2024, HSD held Racial Equity Unity Gatherings to foster collaboration among equity staff. The REC successfully advocated for a dedicated racial equity position and developed racial equity training for managers, with a module now embedded in HSD's New Employee Orientation, reinforcing equity from the start.

HSD COMMITMENTS

- **Prioritizing racial equity and inclusion as an integral component of organizational identity and values**
- **Developing leaders that clearly communicate and believe in the importance of supporting racial equity**
- **Promoting workplace policies, practices, and trainings that equip staff with an understanding of racial equity and methods to create change**
- **Creating a culture that supports open and honest discussion related to racial equity within the department**
- **Identifying and addressing practices, policies, and processes that result in disparate outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color**
- **Optimizing community input to inform racial equity efforts**

OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT SERVICES



The County of Sonoma's largest department, HSD, has over 1,000 employees and a \$320 million 2024-25 Fiscal Year budget. Its leadership is comprised of a director, two assistant directors, Chief Financial Officer, Human Resources Director and four Division Directors. In-person services are available in six Santa Rosa locations. We also have a several satellite offices including locations in North Petaluma, Sonoma and Guerneville.

The Human Services Department (HSD) provides safety net services to the community to support the safety, economic stability, and well-being of over 150,000 individuals and families. Direct services are delivered through four program divisions, with support from administrative services.

DIVISION DESCRIPTIONS

Adult & Aging helps to ensure the safety, independence and well-being of older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, veterans, and their families. Staff provides protective and supportive social services as well as community education and service coordination. Programs include Adult Protective Services (APS), In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), Care Management Services (Multipurpose Senior Services Program, Home and Community Alternatives, Information and Assistance/565-INFO and Linkages), Veterans' Services, Public Administrator/Public Guardian/Public Conservator, and Area Agency on Aging.

Economic Assistance helps low-income individuals and families access medical and dental insurance benefits, and provides money for food, shelter, and other necessities to meet basic needs. Staff determines initial and ongoing eligibility for public benefits for individuals and families, people with disabilities, unemployed individuals, and children in foster care. Programs include Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and County Medical Services Program.

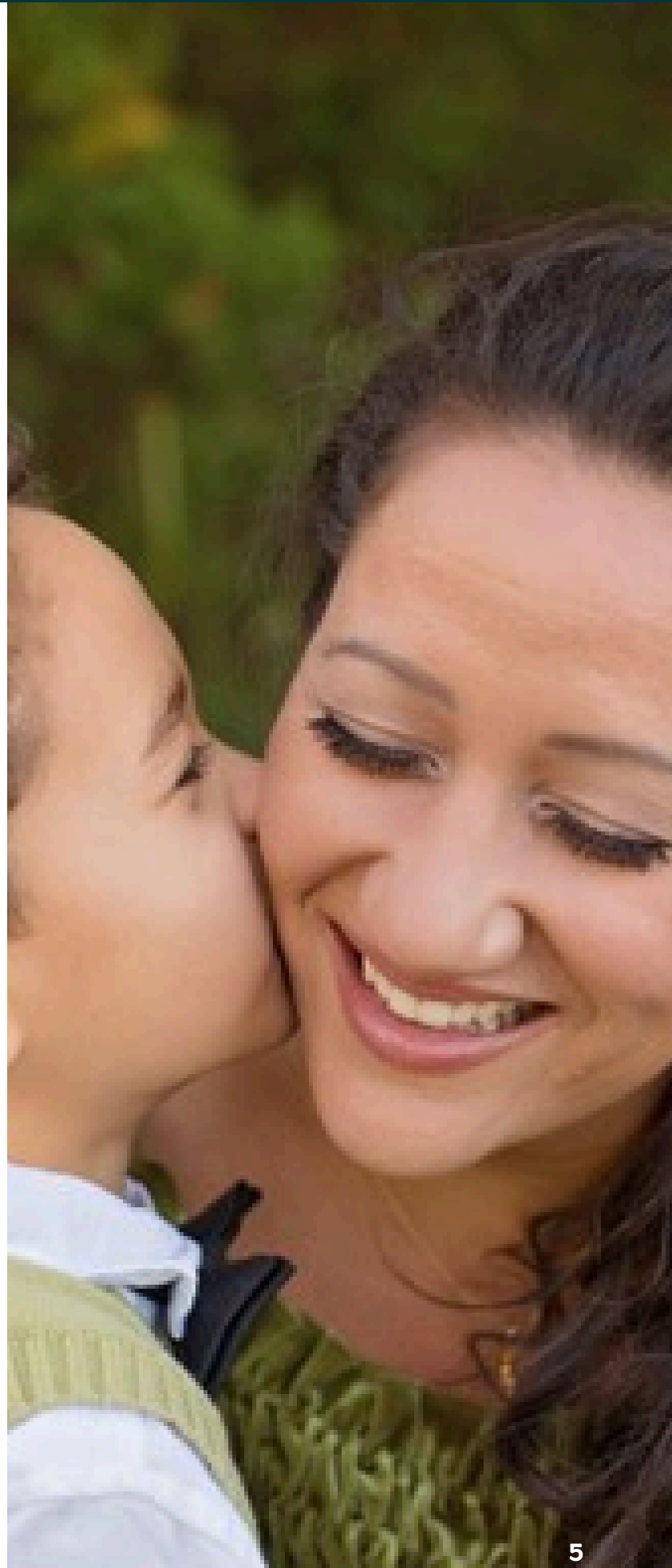
OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT SERVICES

Employment & Training supports individuals and families with financial assistance, job search, employment and training services, and housing. The division also assists employers to find qualified workers and supports workforce development through community partnerships and the in-house job center, Job Link. Staff provides intensive supports for youth and adults to achieve income and social mobility. Programs include California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Job Link), various housing programs, Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps, General Assistance, and the Workforce Investment Board.

Family, Youth and Children helps to ensure the safety and well-being of children, teens and transitional age youth who experience abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Staff provides protective and supportive social services to promote the ideals that children and families deserve stable nurturing homes, a supportive environment, and a sense of personal empowerment and hope. Programs include Valley of the Moon Children's Home, child abuse prevention, child protective services, foster care eligibility and placements, and adoptions.

Executive Management and Administration provides support for the program divisions and the community in the areas of finance, human resources, information technology, program planning and evaluation, contracting, facilities, special investigations and disaster planning and emergency response.

Together, these divisions reflect HSD's commitment to empowering residents, ensuring access to critical services, and strengthening the well-being of the entire Sonoma County community. By addressing the diverse needs of individuals and families, HSD remains dedicated to creating a supportive, inclusive, and responsive social service system.





Why an HSD Strategic Roadmap?

While guided by the County of Sonoma's vision, mission and goals, HSD recognized the need for a more specific Roadmap to navigate ongoing changes in community needs. Since the development of our last Strategic Roadmap, changes in the County include:

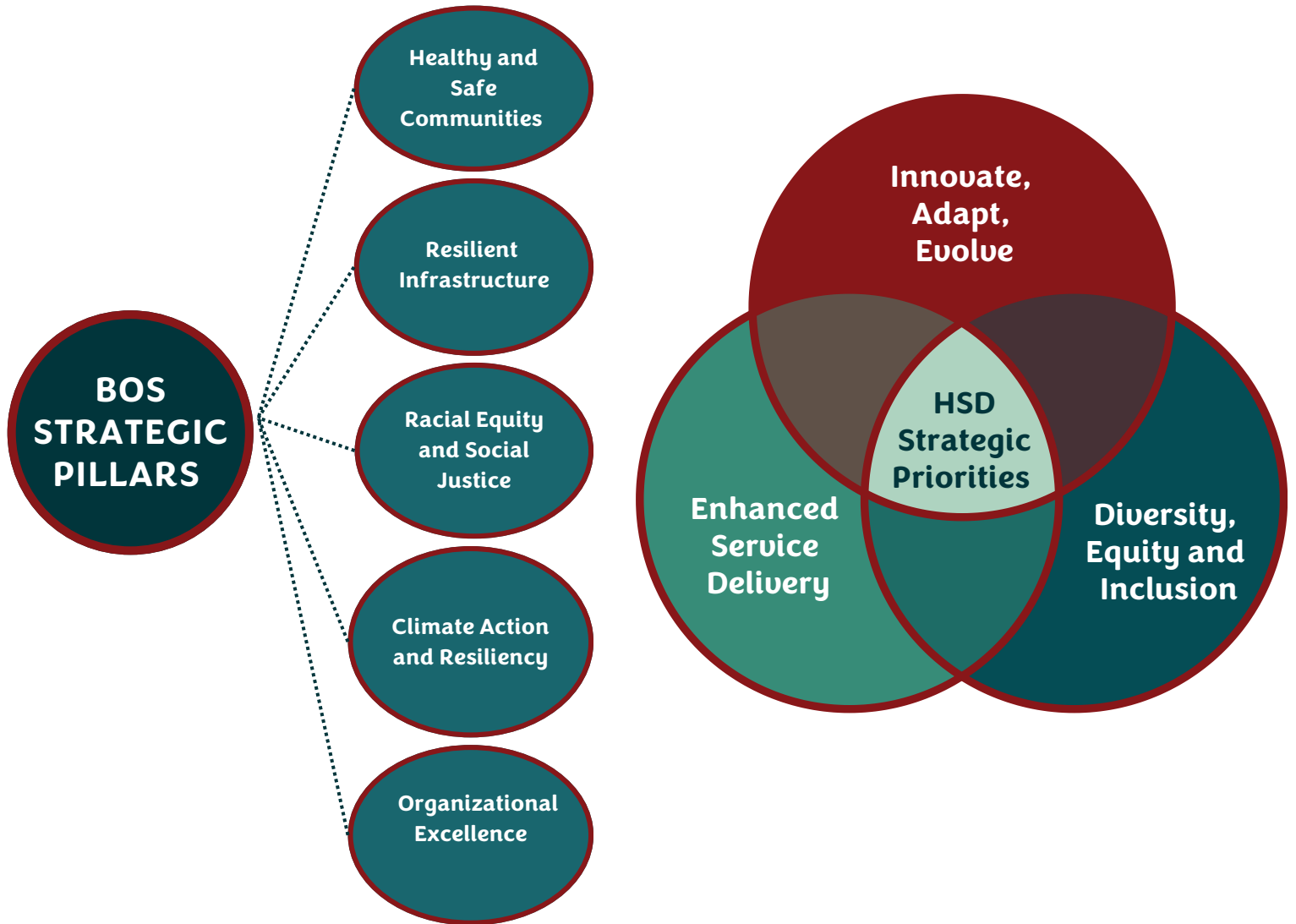
- The COVID-19 Pandemic
- Increase in applications for public assistance programs and ending of Pandemic era of benefits
- Adaption to meet the community's needs in new ways, including virtual, satellite and mobile services for those geographically isolated or with mobility challenges
- Creation of the Sonoma County Office of Equity
- Multiple natural disasters, including 3 catastrophic fires and 2 floods
- Growth in the number of older adults and persons with disabilities, and
- Increase in racial, cultural and linguistic diversity among Sonoma County residents

An Inclusive Planning Process

HSD is committed to including staff voices and input into our Strategic Roadmap. HSD began its strategic planning process in 2023 with the following activities:

- Executive Team developed draft agency Values, Vision, Mission and strategic priorities
- Executive Team reviewed Values, Vision, Mission and strategic priorities with 80 senior management team members and co-created draft goals & strategies
- Convened cross section of division level staff to develop objectives and activities
- HSD Racial Equity Committee convened to develop goals, strategies, objectives and activities
- Convened cross section of division level staff to develop & provide feedback on objectives
- Drafted a Strategic Roadmap
- Reconvened cross section of division level staff to provide feedback on Draft Strategic Roadmap

HSD STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Supporting the Board’s Strategic Roadmap, HSD strives to ensure that all in our community live freely chosen lives to their full potential. This Strategic Roadmap outlines our approach to achieving this vision, ensuring our services are inclusive, equitable, and effective in supporting the diverse needs of Sonoma County’s residents. The three HSD Strategic Priorities focus on changes that support clients, the community and the workforce that serves them.

The three HSD Roadmap Strategic Priorities align with the Board of Supervisors’ five Strategic Pillars.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

GOAL 1:

All HSD staff, especially staff of color, feel a sense of belonging and are supported to achieve their career goals within HSD.

GOAL 1 STRATEGIES

- HSD creates capacity for equity work and expands pipelines for hiring and career advancement.
- HSD offers support and creates accountability for management at all levels to develop an understanding of racial equity principles and practices.
- HSD invests in data collection and reporting systems to drive change that is responsive to staff experiences.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Enhanced Service Delivery

GOAL 1:

People effectively access what they need through integrated and coordinated services.

GOAL 1 STRATEGIES

- Implement an Open Doors/No Wrong Door approach.
- Tailor service models to address the distinct needs of local communities.
- Develop stronger partnerships with community-based organizations.

GOAL 2:

Prevention strategies are used to the greatest extent practicable.

GOAL 2 STRATEGIES

- Create a comprehensive HSD Prevention Strategy that leverages radical collaboration, integrates divisional services, and actively seeks additional funding to enhance effectiveness.
- Prioritize implementing a person-centered, equitable approach in every aspect of our service delivery to enhance access, experience of services, and client satisfaction.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Enhanced Service Delivery



GOAL 3:

HSD has expanded its capacity to use data for decision-making.

GOAL 3 STRATEGIES

- Invest in HSD data infrastructure to expand capacity for data-informed decision-making.
- Increase HSD staff competency to access, use, and understand data.
- Use data to inform all key decisions.

GOAL 4:

HSD is responsive to community needs and includes the community voice in provision of services.

GOAL 4 STRATEGIES

- Establish mechanisms to systematically collect and analyze feedback from clients to improve services.
- Integrate core values in every aspect of our department operations and service delivery system.
- Prioritize the community's perspective by actively involving their voice, sharing decision-making, and allocating sufficient time and resources to support this approach.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Innovate, Adapt, Evolve

GOAL 1:

HSD is an adaptive, learning organization and regularly explores new approaches for service delivery and care coordination.

GOAL 1 STRATEGIES

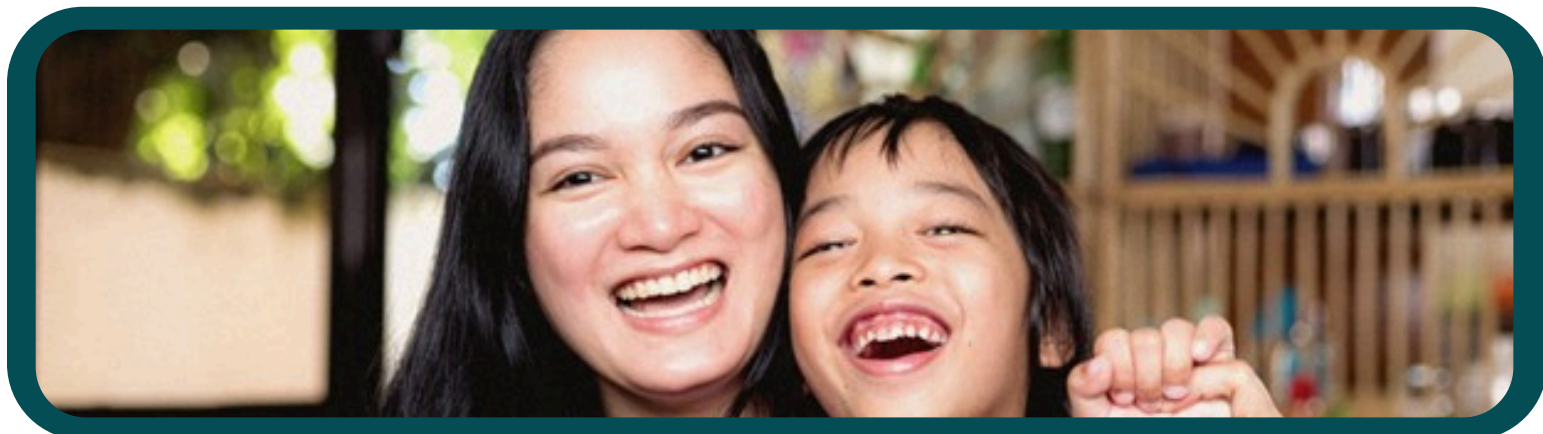
- Develop a decision-making framework that enables the organization to be resilient and responsive to change in alignment with our core values.
- Create a culture of continuous quality improvement and learning to positively impact service delivery with a whole person view across the continuum of services.

GOAL 2:

HSD actively supports the development of a highly skilled workforce and provides opportunities for continuous learning.

GOAL 2 STRATEGIES

- Allocate dedicated time and resources to ensure every staff member can participate in training and professional development programs, enhancing their skills and knowledge.
- Continuously strengthen our recruitment and retention strategies by implementing a systematic review process to identify areas for improvement and innovation.
- Nurture a team of adaptable, flexible, and change-ready staff by offering comprehensive training programs, learning opportunities, and resources that foster an environment of continuous learning and development.
- Consistently communicate and reinforce performance expectations during staff orientation, ongoing training programs and regular coaching with supervisors.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Innovate, Adapt, Evolve



GOAL 3:

Identify and test innovations to improve partnerships and services to the community.

GOAL 3 STRATEGIES

- Leverage cutting-edge technology to optimize operational efficiency and enhance innovation.
- Strategically allocate resources to enhance access to our services through innovative approaches.

GOAL 4:

Collaboration and coordination are enhanced using effective communication structures across programs and administrative divisions.

GOAL 4 STRATEGIES

- Create a robust system for staff engagement in decision-making, ensuring alignment with the appropriate organizational levels, and actively foster shared leadership.
- Create cross-functional teams comprising representatives from each division to drive internal compliance and streamline business processes.



Implementing the HSD Strategic Roadmap: A Collaborative Path Forward

The Human Services Department (HSD) is poised to meet future challenges through a collaborative, energetic, and innovative approach. The Strategic Roadmap will guide our efforts, offering flexibility to adapt to the evolving needs of the people we serve while staying aligned with the mission and vision of the Board.

To implement the Roadmap, HSD will:

- Introduce the Human Services Strategic Roadmap to staff, partners, clients, the community and the Board of Supervisors.
- Collaborate with staff, clients, and partners to integrate current initiatives and develop actionable work plans that address strategic priorities.
- Delegate responsibilities, establish timelines, and define budgets to ensure successful execution of these work plans.
- Set clear success metrics and evaluation processes.
- Conduct quarterly reviews with leadership to monitor progress.
- Foster continuous dialogue and feedback from staff, clients, and community partners.
- Provide annual updates on progress to the Board of Supervisors and the community.

**This process will ensure that HSD remains responsive and effective
in serving Sonoma County residents.**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to HSD Staff, Managers, Executive Team and the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. This Roadmap would not be possible without your leadership, time and commitment to this process.

HSD Executive Team

Department Director: Angela Struckmann
Assistant Director: Paula Glodowski Valla
Assistant Director: Lynn Peralta
Adult and Aging Division: Paul Dunaway
Economic Assistance Division: Katie Greaves

Employment and Training Division: Charity Doronila
Family, Youth and Children Division: Donna Broadbent
Chief Financial Officer: Gerardo Perez
Human Resources Director: Kiergan Pegg
*Strategic Planning Facilitator: Teresa Zimny

HSD Strategic Roadmap & Racial Equity Committee Members

Alante Depp (REC)
Allegra Wilson (REC)
Amanda Bratberg
Amiee Mason
Angelina Aviles
Antonio Vigil (REC)
Ashley Kirkland
Ashley Nolan (REC)
Brenda Roman Aguilar
Christina Cowell
Chris Shields (REC)
Deysy Rojas
Dominic Uyeda (REC)
Flor Cruz
Gretchen Melendy
Jacky Rojas (REC)
Jardin Hawthorne (REC)
Jennifer O'Dell

Jessica Hernandez
Jessica Zimmerman
Jo Mckay (REC)
Joanne Plascencia (REC)
Joni Lewis
Juana Garcia
Kaela Flater
Katie Stohlmann
Kimberly MacNeil (REC)
Kristen Fladseth (REC)
Laura Rania (REC)
Lili Roman Aguilar (REC)
Mai Garrett
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Nancy Keene
Nicole Chavarria
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Rusty Taylor
Sarah Lewis Crow
Sarahi Diaz Acosta
Shawntel Reece (REC)
Sky Grey (REC)
Steven DeSalvo
Susanna Dakin
Teresa Baldassari
Teresa Zimny
Victoria Gonzalez Allen
Wade Anilus (REC)
Yessenia Garza

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

1st District

District Supervisor: Rebecca Hermosillo

2nd District

District Supervisor: David Rabbitt

3rd District

District Supervisor: Chris Coursey

4th District

District Supervisor: James Gore

5th District

District Supervisor: Lynda Hopkins

Contact

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<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Human-Services-Department/>



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