

2020–2024 STRATEGIC PLAN



INTRODUCTION & MISSION

Wayside began in 1977 when a group of local citizens opened Harbinger House, one of the first emergency shelters for homeless and runaway youth in New England. As the need for alternatives to orphanages, reform schools, and psychiatric hospitals grew, Wayside developed services focused specifically on supporting youth and families in their communities.

Today, Wayside is one of the most respected human service agencies in the state supporting more than 6,000 children, youth and families each year throughout Central, Eastern and Northeastern Massachusetts. Wayside provides a variety of high-quality services including family-based outreach services, care coordination services, residential treatment programs and community-based counseling.

**MISSION STATEMENT:
EMPOWERING,
CHILDREN, YOUNG
ADULTS AND FAMILIES
TO ACHIEVE GREATER
INDEPENDENCE
AND EMOTIONAL
WELL-BEING.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the course of 2019 Wayside engaged in a comprehensive process to develop its 2020-2024 strategic plan. This effort was led by the Board of Directors and involved reaching out to external stakeholders, over 100 Wayside staff (in sessions facilitated by Jay Vogt from Peoplesworth), key informant surveys and interviews (conducted by Public Consulting Group), interviews of Wayside clients and parents, a review of our client satisfaction data, financial data, and workforce analysis.

The results were profound. Wayside is undertaking five specific impact goals:

1. Strengthen, improve and measure the quality and impact of our services.
2. Expand existing programs services and geography, while strengthening the financial health of the agency.
3. Respond to the needs of a more focused Wayside mission population.

4. Create a culture of wellness for our employees to support them in the very difficult work they do for us, our communities and children and families.
5. Invest in the career development of our employees to achieve long-term retention engagement.

Wayside will also be embarking on a number of strategic initiatives including advancing permanency work for all youth in our long-term residential programs.

OUR CORE VALUES

STRENGTH

We believe in a strength-based approach, focusing on affirming strategies that promote sustainable change in youth and families. We honor the power of families, who have a wealth of knowledge and are the key drivers in making positive changes. We strive to provide a diverse and welcoming community for our children, young adults and families and our staff.

HOPE

The power of hope is a central force in motivating youth and families to create change and is the basis for our work. Providing a foundation of hope is the key to a positive future. And our staff work tenaciously to help our families reach their goals. Our staff develop inspiring strategies that mobilize our youth and families, use positive reinforcement and expectation setting to promote psychological and physical well-being, and achieve greater independence.

RESILIENCY

We firmly believe all people have the inherent ability to rebound, learn and grow from difficult life experiences. Our staff support our youth and families throughout the process of personal change and help them build the resilience to move beyond adversity.

WAYSIDE'S MANAGEMENT VALUES

OUR MISSION/OUR PASSION

Demonstrating an unsurpassed passion for serving children, young adults and families through mission-driven activities.

QUALITY SERVICES REQUIRE A STRONG, DIVERSE STAFF

Developing and supporting a well-trained staff as diverse as the children, young adults and families we serve.

“ YOUR CLIENTS FEEL CARED FOR. ONE CLIENT SAID SHE'D BEEN IN MANY DIFFERENT PROGRAMS AND THIS IS THE FIRST PROGRAM WHERE SHE FELT INVOLVED AND RESPECTED.”

– COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION

RISK MANAGEMENT/ COMPLIANCE

Ensuring that Wayside mitigates risk through a comprehensive quality improvement approach, and that the agency remains in compliance with all regulatory authorities.

FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Managing the financial drivers of the organization in order to maintain strength and stability.

STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING

Implementing a plan to ensure that our future clients, funders and the community have access to Wayside's depth and breadth of expertise.

PROCESS & APPROACH

In keeping with our vision, Wayside’s leadership participated in a comprehensive strategic planning process to set the agency’s priorities and goals for the next four years. A component of our strategic planning was defining and refocusing our efforts on the mission population we were founded to serve, while also reaffirming our agency’s core values – strength, hope and resiliency.

We reviewed our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan and reflected on the goals of the previous plan. We decided to continue some of the same themes, including the “audacious goal” of “responding to the needs of the communities we serve with immediate access to our services.” To achieve this goal over the next four years, we narrowed the definition of our mission population to increase access to our services for those who have the greatest need.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PRIOR PLAN

GOAL #1 OUR “AUDACIOUS” GOAL

Wayside will RESPOND to the needs of the communities we serve. By the third year of this Plan (2017), no child or family will be required to wait to receive Wayside services. Wait times for services will decrease by 50% by the end of 2015; by 75% by the end of 2016; and be eliminated by the end of 2017.

Our “Audacious Goal” of eliminating all waitlists was unfulfilled despite completing many of the goal’s action steps. Waitlists more than doubled in the past three years from 128 to 263 clients even with the addition of eighteen master’s level clinicians. Specifically, 80 to 90% of clients were waitlisted for outpatient counseling services. This is due to a rise in demand for mental health services, a lack of outpatient providers, reduced stigma and greater awareness about treatment options. Going forward we will proactively refer outpatient clients to other providers to focus on our refined mission population of those with more complex needs.

GOAL #2 A KEY DRIVER

Wayside will SUPPORT our staff team by investing in the hiring and development of a highly trained, diverse and satisfied staff team.

We mostly achieved this “Key Driver” goal. Staff satisfaction with our compensation and benefits increased and we are a recognized as a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) leader. Staff development efforts were significant - 141 staff were promoted over three years. However, during the same period, staff turnover increased from 25% to 29%.

**“ THIS IS AN
INCREDIBLE
AGENCY.”**

– COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION

GOAL #3 KEY DRIVER

Wayside will continue to REINVEST in the agency’s overall financial health and infrastructure.

This “Key Driver” goal was fully achieved. Financial performance for the fiscal year of 2015-2019 exceeded our plan, with an annual margin of 3.8% (goal was 3.25% annually), resulting in improvements to our net worth of \$9.0 million, a four-year increase in our revenues of 32% and an increase in our cash and investments of \$3.4 million.

GOAL #4

Wayside will EXPAND key services to meet community needs and decrease service wait times.

We expanded, grew all our programs – the campus, community services and young adult – services beyond our expectations. We expanded significantly into Medford and Charlton, and other sites increased capacity and staffing. Decreasing waitlists was a loftier goal than anticipated. Despite increasing our master’s level clinicians, we were not able to decrease our waitlists. In fact, they increased per Goal #1.

WAYSIDE SERVICE MAP

EASTERN AND CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

KEY

■ SERVICE AREA

■ RESIDENTIAL/GROUP HOME PROGRAMS

Framingham
Arlington
Somerville

■ INDEPENDENT LIVING APARTMENTS

Framingham
Woburn
Somerville

■ DCF LEAD AGENCY OFFICES

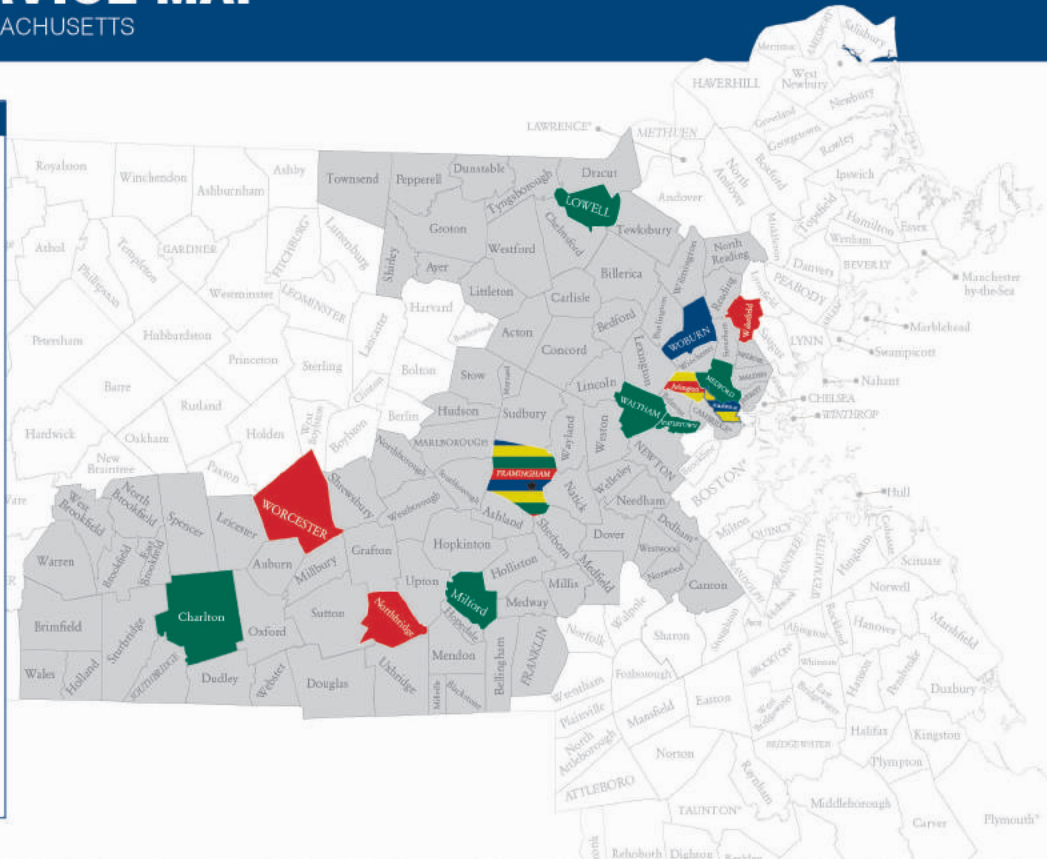
Arlington
Framingham
Wakefield (MetroNorth)
Northbridge (Whitinsville)
Worcester (East)

■ COUNSELING PROGRAMS

Framingham
Lowell
Medford
Milford
Charlton
Waltham
Watertown

★ ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Framingham



HIGHLIGHTS FROM PRIOR PLAN (CONTINUED)

GOAL #5

Wayside will IMPROVE the quality of our services and the service experience of the children, families and communities we serve.

Achieved. There are many examples of how Wayside improved its program quality. Additionally, many of our facilities such as Lowell, Waltham, Milford, MetroWest and campus administration were upgraded during this time as part of our commitment to creating a more positive “customer experience.”

97%
OF FAMILIES
OVERALL WERE
SATISFIED WITH THE
QUALITY OF SERVICES.

GOAL #6

Wayside will ADAPT to the changing health care environment by improving integration with primary care and ensuring we are on the “leading edge” of service delivery at all times.

This goal was achieved. Wayside is a recognized leader in statewide advocacy efforts in various service-specific areas such as the Department of Children & Families’ (DCF) Lead Agencies and Family Support and Stabilization. We were a catalyst for the formation of the Behavioral Health Partners of MetroWest which connected Wayside, Advocates, the South Middlesex Opportunity Council and Spectrum Health Systems, Inc. to the larger medical community. This has been an overwhelming success from a strategic as well as financial standpoint.

We can make more progress toward achieving this goal by increasing marketing and promotion of our strengths and successes.



BOARD CHAIR DR. J. ANTHONY LLOYD, BETSY REID AND ERIC L. MASI PICTURED WITH COA REVIEWERS

2015–2019 SPECIAL INITIATIVES

In addition to reviewing our previous plan, we reviewed several of the agency’s initiatives to inform current goals. Initiatives over the last several years included:

1. DEI

Improving upon our DEI efforts, we increased staff of color to 41%. Our turnover of staff of color dropped from 36% to 26%. We organized and facilitated a customized LCSW/LICSW licensing course specifically designed for bilingual staff and staff of color who have difficulty passing the exam due to language barriers. In addition we:

- Added a DEI Series to our Training Institute
- Completed Validate Challenge Request (VCR) and Courageous Conversation trainings
- Developed an online resource and training guide that serves as a support around the use of the VCR technique

2. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Wayside also completed several sessions of our Leadership Academy for staff. Wayside embarked on this initiative to provide training and skill development for existing employees to prepare them for future leadership roles. Forty-six percent of the participants in these six-week sessions were staff of color.

3. MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING (MI)

Wayside integrated MI as an agency-wide communication model for working with clients and families. After several years of trainings and practice groups across the agency, Wayside’s internal MI training team now provide scheduled, yearly trainings to new employees.



SECOND FROM LEFT: SENATE PRESIDENT KAREN SPILKA PICTURE WITH ERIC L. MASI, ROSALIND BAKER, ALLISON PARKS

4. ADVOCACY

Wayside has increased our advocacy efforts over the last several years in order to achieve better outcomes for youth and families. Advocacy efforts include testifying before Congress about discriminatory background checks and increasing the budget for DCF Lead Agencies and Family Support and Stabilization Services. Wayside partnered with the Children’s League of Massachusetts to advocate for Short-Term Assessment and Rapid Reunification (STARR) reform. Wayside also implemented an Advocacy Committee for employees which meets regularly to discuss advocacy issues and hosts legislators and policy experts.

DEVELOPMENT OF 2020-2024 PLAN: CURRENT ASSESSMENT AND METHODOLOGY

Wayside hired Boston-based Public Consulting Group (PCG), Inc., to complete an Environmental Scan consisting of gathering information from a variety of stakeholders via interviews and surveys about Wayside's strengths and areas for improvement. They also focused on unmet needs within our mission population and future trends in human services. Lastly, PCG reviewed Wayside's financial data which included our balance sheet and operating margins in order to inform potential service expansion.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK METHODS/GROUPS

- Board of directors' discussions during strategic planning process
- Mission population survey completed by employees
- Wayside parent/family focus groups
- Staff engagement sessions - two sessions held in June 2019 and led by Jay Vogt, a recognized expert on organizational development.
- Annual staff satisfaction and DEI surveys
- School administrator surveys - via PCG
- Family/client satisfaction data
- DCF Lead Agencies – via phone interviews with PCG
- Staff Wellness and Voices Committee meeting input
- “Key informant” community partners, agencies, policy makers, referral sources and funders - via interviews with PCG



**WAYSIDE'S WALTHAM AND MEDFORD
PROGRAM STAFF**

FINDINGS FROM CURRENT ASSESSMENT

REPUTATION & STRENGTHS

- Strong commitment to family and client voice.
- Willing to “go above and beyond” to meet the needs of families.
- Strong parent/family support services.
- Large geographic area and variety of services for the continuum of care.
- Strong clinical knowledge and skills.
- Positive relationships with collaterals and care providers.
- Strong legislative advocacy efforts.
- Strong commitment to DEI.
- Excellent reputation for serving youth on campus with complex needs and for our young adults services.
- Strong balance sheet with consistent, positive operating margins.

OPPORTUNITIES/ THREATS

- Impact of the new federal Family First Prevention Services Act on services.
- Expansion plans in the South Central region could be hampered by staffing shortages.
- Finding new sources of funding (grants/development efforts).
- Reducing outpatient services in order to increase access to our mission population.
- Addressing unmet needs with substance abuse, latency age programs and adolescent groups in the community.
- Inconsistent/seasonal referral volume for acute level of care.
- Review Mobile Crisis Intervention operations to improve finances.

WEAKNESSES/ AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Turnover of staff is consistent with other agencies but leads to service disruption and communication challenges.
- Minimal profit margin without expansion of services.
- Need for more bi-lingual employee capacity in certain locations.
- Need to focus on retaining new employees long term.
- Agency commitment and efforts around self-care and wellness.
- Longer waitlists - focus on increasing access for our mission population.
- Increase managers of color within the agency.
- Poor financial performance within outpatient clinics and mobile crisis services.

**OUR STAFF
ARE WILLING TO GO
“ABOVE AND BEYOND”
TO MEET THE NEEDS OF
OUR FAMILIES.**

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The process of developing the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan has been instrumental in creating alignment across the agency and among stakeholders. This process continues to inform Wayside as we position ourselves to adapt to the changing financial and political environment and needs of the communities we serve. As a result, our commitment to providing the highest quality services to the most underserved populations while supporting vulnerable families is unwavering.

Senior leadership met with the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Directors, led by Gregg Andonian and Susan Yi-Millette, to draft strategic goals based on the findings of our Environmental Scan, staff engagement sessions and stakeholder input. The strategic goals were developed with a focus on increasing access on our “mission population,” staff retention and satisfaction and career development opportunities. Goals were and presented to the Board of Directors for their review, input and approval. The Strategic Planning Committee recognized strengthening families was a common theme of the feedback and it ultimately became the plan’s central vision.

OVERALL VISION: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Wayside’s vision for 2020-2024 Strategic Plan is Strengthening Families. It reflects our values as well as our Mission statement: “Empowering children, young adults and families to achieve greater independence and emotional well-being.” This plan makes Wayside’s commitment to the quality and scope of our service delivery and our outcomes clear, supported by increasing staff engagement and promoting wellness. By enhancing these two vital areas, Wayside will not only be able to meet the needs of young adults and families, but will be able to achieve long-term, sustainable outcomes.

| ANALYSIS | THEMES | IMPACT GOALS |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of prior plan • Stakeholder interviews • Staff engagement sessions • Family focus groups • Workforce analysis • Financial data • Client satisfaction data • Community needs assessment data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the impact of our services by using data • Use existing expertise in services to provide programming in new locations • Increase financial strength by expanding and serving more communities • Prioritize access and services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations • Promote activities, resources, and education to support employee wellness • Develop strategies to increase recruitment and retention of our workforce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen, improve, and measure the quality and impact of services • Expand existing programs, services and geography to strengthen the financial health of the agency. • Respond to the needs of our mission population • Create a culture of wellness • Invest in career development to achieve long-term retention and engagement |

STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS:

Our five major areas of focus are designed to maximize the effectiveness of our plan by grouping our strategic goals into action-driven categories - Strengthen, Expand, Respond, Create and Invest. Additionally, many of the strategic goals are designed to be complementary of each other and executed simultaneously.

A summary of the five strategic areas of focus:

1. STRENGTHEN

A hallmark of Wayside's Core Values is providing programming aimed at building family support that results in promoting sustainable change. In order to fully assess the scope and impact of services provided and determine their long-term effectiveness, Wayside will implement a new data collection and reporting system. The primary way to understand and determine the impact of our staff and services is to assess agency-wide measurable tools while eliciting direct feedback from stakeholders and the families we serve. In this way, we can ensure that all pertinent voices are interwoven in the development of innovative programming and enhancement of current programming that meets the needs of our population and strengthens our service delivery.

2. EXPAND

One of the key drivers that motivates Wayside's commitment to financial sustainability is the ability to provide comprehensive, area-specific services to the communities we serve. Wayside has a history of adeptly focusing on growth and financial stability in a manner that maintains its commitment to staff, families and communities while maintaining overall fiscal responsibility. Over the next four years Wayside will focus on increasing our service revenue and securing our infrastructure to ensure we are able to continue to meet the needs of our staff and clients, despite the ever-changing economic environment. Targeted financial growth will be achieved by increasing direct service programming to capitalize on new funding

streams, utilizing newly acquired technological advancements to enhance communication and efficiency, developing strategic partnerships to promote more in-depth service provision and expanding into new geographic areas based on needs identified in our Environmental Scan and current assessment.

3. RESPOND

Wayside will adapt and respond to the unmet needs of our mission population, referral sources and core communities. Wayside is recognized for our quality of care, comprehensive approaches to programming and community involvement. Wayside will look at increasing our expertise in substance abuse and autism spectrum disorders and increase service availability by 2024 to underserved populations who struggle to access care. We will identify underserved populations by geographic region as well as those who face need-based barriers in accessing care in their community due to a lack of transportation or childcare, for instance. Wayside will partner with community providers, enhance advocacy efforts, integrate evidence-based practices and develop employees and programming to prioritize access for our mission population as well as to meet the changing needs of our communities.

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS (CONTINUED)

4. CREATE

Wayside recognizes the commitment and expertise of our employees. Our staff are the heart and soul of Wayside's values as they provide strength and hope and build resiliency every day through their work. It is essential that we support our employees by also supporting a culture of wellness. This includes organizing team building and collegial activities, developing methods for true collaboration, providing training/resources that enhance wellness, and supporting a work/life balance all to optimize overall wellbeing. Creating a culture that supports staff from the inside out is designed to increase job satisfaction, collaboration, health and wellness and promote future tenure.

5. INVEST

Wayside will invest in career mentoring and education/training opportunities to achieve long-term retention and engagement with our employees. Wayside will invest in job satisfaction, retention and professional development of our employees. This initiative will benefit the agency as it lowers the financial burden of rehiring and training employees, and have a positive impact on the youth and families who we serve by providing consistency. We will implement a Wayside Career Map that focuses on career coaching and mentoring and offer the opportunity for staff to engage in cross-program collaboration and job shadowing/sharing. We will expand our internal recruiting system to identify opportunities for staff promotion, career growth and the opportunity to move into various roles throughout the agency.



STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & ACTION STEPS

1. STRENGTHEN

Wayside will strengthen, improve and measure the quality as well as sustained impact of our services.

Action Steps:

1. Strengthen caregiver skills to better manage care of our youth and their symptoms.
2. Increase family and community connections for families to engage and rely upon for support.
3. Advance our permanency work in our residential programs in order to achieve positive outcomes and lasting connections for all long-term youth.
4. Integrate DEI training into the treatment process with clients and families.
5. Improve diagnosis and treatment planning by using screening tools/assessments at regularly scheduled intervals during treatment.
6. Enhance the use of our Electronic Health Records and develop data collecting and reporting systems to continuously measure outcomes and sustained impact of our services post discharge.

2. EXPAND

Wayside will expand existing programs and services, grow into new geography/locations and strengthen the financial health of the agency in order to better serve youth and their families.

Action Steps:

1. Expand existing services where there is agency expertise, community need and profitability.
2. Increase capacity and services for Transitional Age Youth (TAY).
3. Leverage our internal expertise by conducting and providing workshops, consulting opportunities and trainings.
4. Develop strategic partnerships or potential mergers with other providers.
5. Increase capacity of adolescent residential programming through the building of a new group home at 3 Lockland Ave.
6. Develop service efficiencies using technology such as Telehealth, in order to increase access.
7. Increase program and service revenue by 50 percent over the next four years.
8. Expand development and marketing efforts to increase non-governmental revenue.
9. Research the benefits and potential impact of developing an agency volunteer program.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & ACTION STEPS (CONTINUED)

3. RESPOND

Wayside will respond to the needs of our mission population and communities.

Action Steps:

1. Prioritize access for those who are most in need and have limited options for services elsewhere.
2. Develop collaborative partnerships with other community providers to refer other clients in order to focus on mission population.
3. Develop programming/services for dual diagnosis/community-based addiction services.
4. Increase our capacity to provide more comprehensive services for autism spectrum disorders.
5. Enhance advocacy efforts through collaboration with trade organizations and other providers.
6. Provide training and certification in evidence-based, trauma-informed care models to meet the needs of youth and families.
7. Develop staff expertise through Wayside's Training Institute, online trainings and certifications (e.g. substance abuse).



WAYSIDE TEMPO AND CAMPUS STAFF AT THE 2019 5K4KIDS

4. CREATE

Wayside will build and support a culture of wellness that promotes overall health for employees.

Action Steps:

1. Develop an agency employee recognition program.
2. Provide training for supervisors to reduce caregiver fatigue/burnout.
3. Provide employees ongoing education about financial, physical and emotional wellness.
4. Collaborate with an external resource to impact the culture of wellness throughout the agency.
5. Organize and incorporate mindfulness activities and behavioral health resources to improve work-life balance.
6. Increase team building within programs and provide opportunities for employees to engage in social activities and cross-program collaboration with co-workers.

5. INVEST

Wayside will invest in career mentoring and development opportunities in order to become an industry leader in long-term employee retention and engagement.

Action Steps:

1. Implement the Wayside Career Map as well as career development plans for all full-time employees through a Career Development Coordinator.
2. Develop a system for internal job shadowing and cross-program collaboration to increase knowledge about agency positions/ programs and to gain work experience outside of their current job.
3. Expand our internal recruitment system to increase career opportunities for current staff.
4. Develop a more robust compensation system, including the potential for merit pay.
5. Achieve higher year-over-year employee engagement retention and overall job satisfaction.



**SHORTSTOP PROGRAM DIRECTOR ANTWAN STEED
AND FORMER CLIENT ROLANDO ROJAS**

We would like to thank everyone involved in this effort including our staff, Board of Directors, Strategic Planning Committee members and agency leadership:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Rev. Dr. J. Anthony Lloyd, Board Chair
Dr. Lorretta M. Holloway, Vice Chairperson
Eric Lazzari, Clerk
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Cheryl Aglio-Girelli
Dr. Edward Cohen
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James Mitrano
Michelle Simms
Susan Yi-Millette

ERIC L. MASI, ED.D
President & CEO

This planning effort was led by:

**STRATEGIC PLANNING
COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Board members Gregg Andonian and Susan Yi-Millette of the Board of Directors Strategic Planning Committee and Sara McCabe, LICSW Vice President of Wayside's Campus Services

Special Thanks to the Public Consulting Group for conducting our Environmental Scan and Jay Vogt of Peoplesworth for leading our staff engagement sessions.