



THE POWER OF CHANGE

## 2017-2021 Strategic Plan

### *Strategic Planning Committee*

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## I. Introduction

### **Background and Purpose**

In May of 2016, the Albany Community Action Partnership (ACAP) initiated a strategic planning process to identify and establish priorities that will guide the development and utilization of human and financial resources toward greater customer and community impact during the next five years.

This document presents ACAP's affirmation of its mission, an updated vision for the organization's future, and nine goals to drive the organization's impact on individuals and families, the community, and the organization's capacity as a service provider, advocate, employer, business operation and community partner. The plan provides a framework for board and staff accountability and communication around a set of shared commitments, and a base from which to respond to anticipated and unanticipated challenges and opportunities.

### **Data Sources and Planning Activities**

In 2012 ACAP worked with Siena Research Institute (SRI) to conduct a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment for Albany County. In December 2015 ACAP conducted a follow up assessment that looked at the public perception of quality of life, local services and institutions, identified levels of social needs in general and of low income residents specifically, assessed the adequacy of programs, and identified attitudes towards addressing social programs in the county.

ACAP established a Strategic Planning Committee to work with the planning consultant to design the planning process, establish agendas and priorities, and review and finalize the planning document prior to Board approval.

In addition, the Board of Directors and staff participated in a written survey and self-assessment in August and September of 2016 to review the organization's mission, values, and vision; conduct an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunity, and threats; and recommend goals and actions in a range of program, administrative, community, and governance areas. In addition, the Board conducted a self-assessment of governance practices and knowledge. The assessment and surveys informed the planning process, providing the basis for discussion at a full day retreat with the Board of Directors and senior staff held on September 17, 2016. In addition, the senior staff held a planning session on October 18, 2016 to review the results of the retreat and provide further detail to administrative and program goals and action planning.

**Poised for Leadership: Partnerships, Sustainability and Community Needs**

ACAP's previous strategic plan recognized that ACAP was positioned to leverage its recent stability, growth and visibility in order to take advantage of new opportunities for service integration, strategic alliances, capital projects and collaborative community development initiatives. This planning process recognized that ACAP is now positioned to fully integrate the multi-generational programming needed to empower families to move out of poverty as well as lend its expertise to community partners to increase the community's collective impact.

**The Board of Directors and Senior Management Staff, early in the planning process, noted the need to address these organizational priorities:**

1. Ensure that program growth and development is aligned with the mission, meets community needs, and are funded in a way that enables both programs and the organization as a whole to be viable and sustainable.
2. Ensure that the strategic plan is fully embraced by the Board of Directors and used pro-actively to drive organizational priorities, budgeting, and action planning.
3. Develop an active board presence in fund development, engaging individual donors, community groups and other supporters, and generating reliable financial and in-kind support.

**The following unmet community needs have also been identified, from the 2015 Community Needs Assessment as priorities for ACAP's attention, as refinements to existing programs, new program development, and/or collaborations with other organizations:**

1. Maximize opportunities for employment services through expanded partnerships and career options as well as providing training during non-traditional hours.
2. Build partnerships with area housing providers to leverage opportunities to increase energy and safety efficiencies and improve quality of housing.
3. Expand access to food and nutrition resources by expanding healthy choices workshops and partnering to increase access to healthy food.
4. Expand hours of child care service, particularly for before and after care.
5. Enhance early childhood education to meet greatest needs and maximize parenting programs and workshops.
6. Create educational workshops and enhance financial literacy and assets building education services to community.

**Plan Format and Accountability**

The plan document follows the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) format, based on the six National Community Action Goals. For each of the three major impact areas described in the national goals – Family and Individuals, Community, and Agency Capacity/Partnerships – a statement of strategic direction heads the column in which a program goal, an administrative goal, and a governance goal describe ACAP’s intended impact in that area. Each goal is accompanied by one or more strategies.

As with the previous plan, more detailed action plans for each of the goals and accompanying strategies will be developed at the program management, agency administration and board levels, as indicated in the left hand column. These will include completion and reporting dates, based on regulatory requirements and on a schedule, to be determined, of regular progress updates by each of the responsible groups. These reporting dates will be represented in an annual calendar of key governance and management events.

Staff will align the plan’s program and administrative strategies, to the extent possible, with the Community Services Block Grant work plan format, so that regulatory reporting and internal reporting will not require an unreasonable duplication of effort.

## II. Mission, Vision, and Values

### Mission

ACAP works in partnership with families and communities to empower people to achieve economic self-sufficiency and an improved quality of life.

### Vision

The Albany Community Action Partnership is:

1. A trusted and reliable leader in community relationships.
2. A leader in business operations, demonstrating continual improvement in the skills, systems and teamwork that create excellence.
3. A good neighbor, investing human and financial resources in the communities around us.
4. A leading advocate, naming and breaking down societal barriers to economic self-sufficiency.
5. An innovator and collaborator, allied with other organizations that seek creative, intentional solutions to longtime challenges and changing community needs.

### Values/Guiding Principles

#### **Community**

- Our community includes a diverse array of people and institutions. We respect this diversity, each person's life circumstances, and the privacy of every individual we serve. We recognize that we are stronger by working together and by accepting our differences as well as our commonalities.

#### **Action**

- We will be pro-active in meeting customer needs, addressing community issues, and striving for excellence in all that we do. We believe that people should be empowered to self-advocate, assume responsibility, become self-sufficient, and use their inherent strengths to thrive and succeed.

#### **Partnership**

- We see partnership as the catalyst for achieving our goals. We work collaboratively with the families we serve as well as with stakeholders who share our values.

<p><b>Impact on →</b></p> <p><b>Accountability ↓</b></p>	<p><b>Family &amp; Individuals</b></p> <p><b>ACAP will provide opportunities for people to become more self-reliant, improve their economic circumstances and make stronger connections to ongoing networks of support.</b></p>	<p><b>Community</b></p> <p><b>ACAP’s programs, advocacy and leadership will result in improved community conditions and greater community involvement and influence for low income people.</b></p>	<p><b>Agency Capacity</b></p> <p><b>ACAP will build on its record of growth and capacity development, aligning its mission and programs with sustainable resources, strategic partners, effective business systems to address critical community needs.</b></p>
<p><b>National CSBG Goals</b></p>	<p>1 – Low Income People become more self sufficient</p> <p>6 – Low income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems</p>	<p>2 – The conditions in which low income people live are improved</p> <p>3 – Low income people own a stake in their community</p>	<p>4 – Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low income people are achieved</p> <p>5 – Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results</p>
<p><b>Program</b></p>	<p><b>ACAP will expand and integrate educational and programmatic efforts to ensure that individuals and families can establish and achieve both short term and long-term goals.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-examine and revitalize the use of a coordinated intake to better connect family needs with the self-sufficiency scale and services.</li> <li>2. Develop a strategy to integrate long term education, asset-building, and career planning into all service areas.</li> <li>3. Identify methods of integrating the two-generational approach through all programs.</li> <li>4. Solicit and collect customer feedback and information regarding program services, polices and/or needs and share information with board, partners and staff.</li> </ol>	<p><b>ACAP will continue to develop strategies, build partnerships, and leverage resources to provide services that effectively serve rural communities, expand the accessibility of services in the city of Albany, and strengthen a sense of community for all.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore the development of online tools and resources that will enable ACAP to expand access to programs.</li> <li>2. Identify and engage stakeholder and partners to determine the feasibility and potential approach to facilitating access to services in rural areas in a cost-effective manner.</li> </ol>	<p><b>ACAP will incorporate strategies such as the “Strength Finders” model to engage staff and strengthen organizational culture and foster standards of excellence.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operationalize the customer intake process and work to ensure that it provides seamless access to all ACAP services.</li> <li>2. Review and improve all processes and ensure staff are aware of and routinely trained in any changes to break down silos and ensure customer focused accountability.</li> <li>3. Strengthen in-house programmatic training modules (on-boarding, program expectations, etc.)</li> <li>4. Increase the marketing and outreach of programs to increase visibility, enrollment and demonstrate impact.</li> </ol>

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<p><b>Administration</b></p>	<p><b>ACAP will implement its two/multi-generational approach to service delivery across all programs to help families build assets, improve education, health and wellness, and end the cycle and circumstances of poverty.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase knowledge and understanding by staff of the two-generational model across agency programs there by improving program referrals and the use of data tools.</li> <li>2. Examine, re-design and evaluate the integrated assessment tool based on consistent and measurable dimensions.</li> </ol>	<p><b>ACAP will generate, access and utilize data to promote our expertise, demonstrate and improve the value and benefits of our services, and tell a compelling story of community impact.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen MOUs with school districts to obtain data and ensure compliance.</li> <li>2. Explore the possibility of collaborative data collection analysis for needs assessment and community planning.</li> <li>3. Develop a coordinated volunteer program that will expand opportunities for volunteer engagement and strengthen the utilization and management of volunteers.</li> </ol>	<p><b>ACAP will continue efforts to document and enhance processes and protocols across all programs, service areas, and administration and ensure uniformity where appropriate.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish an agreed upon business model as the basis for ongoing board and staff sustainability planning.</li> <li>2. Evaluate the impact of minimum wage increases and plan accordingly.</li> <li>3. Develop a comprehensive risk management and emergency preparedness plan.</li> <li>4. Develop a facilities plan and corresponding financial plan.</li> <li>5. Ensure technology infrastructure supports for program and administrative effectiveness.</li> </ol>

		<p>4. Develop key relationships and build intentional partnerships with the community to further our mission, partner for funding, and be seen as vital partners at the table.</p>	<p>6. Expand opportunities for staff development, leadership development, and career building for ACAP employees.</p> <p>7. Allocate resources for the development and implementation of a marketing and communications plan.</p>
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<p><b>Governance</b></p>	<p><b>ACAP will develop an ongoing process of community engagement to ensure that consumer sector representatives find avenues to contribute to ACAP’s success, including Board participation.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Board members and staff will pro-actively build the relationships needed to engage local community-based organizations, Housing Authorities, city agencies, etc. in ACAP’s activities.</li> <li>2. The Board Development Committee will develop and implement a board recruitment strategy specific to the community sector.</li> </ol>	<p><b>ACAP’s Board of Directors will be effective and confident ambassadors and advocates, building the relationships needed to ensure organizational sustainability and mission impact.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Board of Directors will provide or obtain training and participate in on site program visits to ensure that members are well versed in the organization’s mission, programs, messaging, and goals.</li> <li>2. ACAP will highlight and profile the participation of Board Members in the agency’s newsletter.</li> </ol>	<p><b>ACAP will enhance the functionality and effectiveness of our governance team by ensuring diverse and well-informed representation and a pro-active and engaged committee structure.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Board Development Committee will establish clear participation expectations and implement a board assessment process annually.</li> <li>2. The Board Development Committee shall develop a strategic approach to the ongoing cultivation, orientation, recruitment, and development of board members.</li> <li>3. The Board of Directors shall establish an annual schedule of committee meetings with agendas tied to organizational priorities.</li> </ol>

		3. The Executive Committee will ensure that ACAP uses the strategic plan to drive organizational priorities and decision making.	4. The Board of Directors will establish an active role for board members in fund development planning, giving, and donor cultivation.
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