



Fiscal Year 2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan

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August 2022

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1.0 Overview

In May 2021, True North Strategic Advisors (True North) was engaged by Northeastern Center (NEC) to work with the organization and its Board to assist in advancing its strategic plan. This document contains the output of that collaborative project, including the following components:

Strategic Context

In this section, a brief history of NEC is outlined, as well as NEC's Mission, Vision, and Shared Values. While the mission of the organization remains unchanged, the Vision and Shared Values were reviewed and updated as a part of this project and have been affirmed by the Board.

Strategic Plan

The strategies and tactics that emerged for NEC are outlined in this section, which comprise the actionable goals of the Strategic Plan covering fiscal years 2023-2025. Further, an explanation of related documents, including a working version of the Strategic Plan in an excel format, are outlined, along with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will allow NEC and the Board to monitor the progress and success of the Plan.

Implementation Plan

Lastly, an Implementation Plan was created in conjunction with NEC to assist with operationalizing the Strategic Plan and preparing for potential roadblocks that might limit the progress of the plan.

True North is thankful for the opportunity to partner with Northeastern Center and help further its mission and impact across the counties it serves in Northeast Indiana through the creation of this Strategic Plan.

2.0 Strategic Context

2.1 Northeastern Center History

Adapted from information provided by Northeastern Center:

At the time of the Community Mental Health Act in 1963, Oaklawn Center in Elkhart provided minimal mental health services to DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble and Steuben counties, with especially strong ties to LaGrange and Steuben counties. When DeKalb and Noble counties attempted to establish a four-county mental health corporation, the two northern counties declined participation and financial support; and DeKalb and Noble decided to move ahead on their own. In 1970, the Northeastern Psychiatric Clinic, Inc., was formed, located in Kendallville. Operating funds were contracted from the state, the building at 305 E. North Street was leased, and a small staff was hired. The clinic was considered an Oaklawn satellite because Oaklawn provided management expertise and part-time psychiatric coverage.

Though the staff of the Northeastern Clinic quickly expanded, demand soon surpassed the clinic's capacity to provide service. The Board and Oaklawn Center decided to seek federal funds for a mental health center through an Initial Operations Grant, which mandated a four-county Board of Directors. In April 1975, the Northeastern Clinic was incorporated as a community mental health center with a mission to serve the residents of DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble and Steuben counties. The Center continued with its contractual management arrangement with Oaklawn until 1977, when the Center dissolved its contract with Oaklawn in order to receive ongoing state support.

From 1977 to the present, the Center's staff has grown to over 200 employees and the annual budget has grown from \$300,000 to over \$18,000,000. Administrative support for the Center is in downtown Kendallville. The Center is accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) with the next scheduled accreditation survey in 2023.

Some of the Center's offerings presently include:

- Outpatient offices in Angola, Auburn, Albion, Kendallville, and LaGrange
- Clubhouse facilities in Kendallville
- An eight-bed supervised group living facility for adults in Kendallville (Pioneer Lodge I)
- A six-bed supervised group living facility for adults in Angola (Pioneer Lodge II)
- A 15-bed independent living apartment complex in Kendallville (Opportunity Apartments)
- A 16-bed inpatient hospital located in Auburn
- Operation of more than twenty vans providing transportation to individuals

While the Center has experienced significant growth in its last 40 years of service, it continues to hold to its mission of providing accessible, affordable, and quality behavioral health services.

2.2 Mission, Vision, and Shared Values

Mission:

Northeastern Center (NEC) helps individuals achieve emotional and mental wholeness through accessible, affordable and quality behavioral health services.

As a part of the Strategic Planning process, the mission statement was affirmed by the leadership team and Board of Northeastern Center. Staff at all levels feel a high degree of mission alignment and a strong sense of shared purpose.

Vision:

The Vision for Northeastern Center at the start of the Strategic Planning process stated:

Our Vision - Northeastern Center's vision is to provide a caring and supportive environment where individuals can:

- *Achieve their full potential*
- *Give and receive respect*
- *Develop personal responsibility and self-determination*

As the project progressed, the extended leadership team and Board recognized that the original Vision statement too closely echoed the Mission statement and did not provide directional guidance for the Center's future. Therefore, the Board affirmed the suggestion to update the Vision Statement for Northeastern Center, which now states:

As the premier provider of behavioral health services, Northeastern Center is the trusted partner empowering individuals to find hope, recovery, and a path forward.

Shared Values:

As a part of the Strategic Planning process, Northeastern Center leadership developed the following shared values that will reinforce organizational identity and the desired culture:

Always and everywhere, Northeastern Center's first response is CPR:

- **Compassion** – kindness, caring, and a willingness to help
- **Partnership** – together, achieving a shared goal
- **Respect** – value all individuals

3.0 Strategic Plan

3.1 Overview of Strategies and Goals

The ideas generated from the Assessment process, Board review, and NEC management discussion in a leadership workshop were calibrated into four critical themes that became the Major Strategies for the plan:

1. People
2. Process
3. Program
4. Plan

NEC also identified several goals that describe the successful implementation of each of the strategies. Lastly, Supporting Strategies were developed as sub-strategies under each Major Strategy that further expand on how each strategy will be executed. Each supporting strategy has a detailed set of tactical action steps, documented in the Strategic Action Plan workbook.

3.2 Strategic Plan

The tables on the following pages show the Major Strategies, Goals, and Supporting Strategies of the Strategic Plan for NEC, covering Fiscal Year 2023 through 2025. Additional detail can be found in other documents related to the Strategic Plan – see section [3.3 Related Documents](#) for more information.

Within the Strategic Plan, the Major and Supporting Strategies are numbered using a two-digit schema, where the first digit represents the Major Strategy, and the second digit represents the Supporting Strategy. For example, 1.2 represents Major Strategy 1, Supporting Strategy 2.

1. People

Become the premier healthcare provider

Celebrate our story

Recognize and reward staff

1.1 Make a case for to work/stay working at NEC

1.2 Improve orientation process

1.3 Promote career development

1.4 Improve internal communication

1.5 Increase SMT visibility

1.6 Create online directories

1.7 Connect staff in like roles

1.8 Create and pilot an innovation program

1.9 Create opportunities and methods to recognize staff tied to M, V, and SV

2. Program




Define agency strategy

Ensure agency alignment

2.1 Develop a clear agency strategy

2.2 Define success at an agency and individual level

Key:

-  = Major Strategy
-  = Goals of the Major Strategy
-  = Supporting Strategies

3. Plan

Create marketing and technology plans aligned with Agency goals/priorities

Increase NEC presence/awareness in the community

3.1 Develop a Marketing Plan

3.2 Develop a Technology Plan

3.3 Increase community engagement

4. Process

Improve the client experience

Provide resources for staff success

Improve agency profitability

4.1 Measure customer satisfaction

4.2 Improve intake and appointment scheduling experience

4.3 Define a strategy to improve access to services, including telehealth and mobile services

4.4 Customer Service training

4.5 Create customer-facing virtual tours / videos

4.6 Improve productivity monitoring process

4.7 Make NEC data more accessible internally and more useful / actionable for leadership

4.8 Improve profitability via expense reduction strategies

Key:

- = Major Strategy
- = Goals of the Major Strategy
- = Supporting Strategies

3.3 Related Documents

As a part of the strategic planning project, True North has provided NEC with the following documents related to the Strategic Plan outlined in [section 3.2](#).

Strategic Action Plan

The Strategic Action Plan is an Excel workbook with detailed action steps and metrics for each Major Strategy within the plan. It contains the following spreadsheet tabs:

- Summary: A listing of the Major Strategies, Supporting Strategies, and Goals
- Timeline: A visual representation of the duration of each Supporting Strategy, used to ensure appropriate resource allocation and consideration of any dependencies
- Dashboard: A report that captures metrics and milestones that are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the plan's success. This tab will be used for quarterly Board reporting on the progress of the plan (See [section 3.4](#) in this document for more information)
- M, V, SV: A summary of the plan to introduce the new Vision and Shared Values for NEC, as well as incorporating it into the culture of the organization.
- Major Strategy tabs: Each Major Strategy is detailed on a separate tab, including the following data elements:
 - Supporting Strategies
 - Tactics
 - Financial Implications
 - Notes
 - Starting Timeline
 - Milestones & Metrics
 - % Complete
 - Primary Accountability

The Action Plan is intended to serve as NEC's working document for the plan, used to capture updates and track progress as the plan is carried out.

Strategic Process Document

The Strategic Process document captures a detailed walk-through of the strategic planning process used by True North with NEC. It includes the following sections:

- Project Overview
- Assessment Findings and Conclusions
- Strategy Development

This document captures a historical snapshot of the planning process and is not intended to be used with external audiences or for day-to-day management of the Strategic Plan.

3.4 Key Performance Indicators

The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Dashboard is found within the Strategic Action Plan workbook. This report contains the following details:

- At least one Metric or Milestone for each Major Strategy within the Strategic Plan, which will serve as indicators of the plan's progress and success
- For every Metric/Milestone, a Measurement has been identified, which simply explains how the Metric or Milestone will be quantified or how NEC will know when it has been achieved.
- For quantifiable Measurements, a Target has also been provided as a goal NEC is working toward for that Metric.
- A Status for every Metric/Milestone, to be updated by NEC quarterly.
- A column for every quarter throughout the duration of the Strategic Plan, which will be used with a color-coded schema to indicate the progress trends over time for each Metric/Milestone:
 - Green = On target
 - Yellow = Attention needed
 - Red = Behind target

Tracking of these KPIs will occur within the Strategic Action Plan excel workbook. The KPI Dashboard will be updated by NEC at least quarterly and provided to the Board of Directors as a snapshot of the Plan's progress, successes, and potential areas of risk. In addition, a quarterly summary of progress will be captured within this document for the duration of the Strategic Plan, through fiscal year 2025. See [Appendix A: Plan Updates](#) for more information.

A high-level summary of the KPI themes for each Major Strategy and Goal is presented in the table on the following page. The detailed KPI metrics and measurements are outlined in the Strategic Action Plan excel workbook.

Summary of KPI Themes

Major Strategy	Major Strategy Goal	KPI Themes
People	Become the premier healthcare provider	Attract and retain quality staff, invest in career development
	Celebrate our story	Rating on staff satisfaction survey, improve staff connectedness
	Recognize and reward staff	Incentivize innovation, align recognition with agency mission, vision, and values
Program	Define agency strategy	Agency goals articulated and communicated, targeted growth strategy for NEC portfolio of products/services
	Ensure agency alignment	Staff connectedness to mission, vision, and values as well as strategic goals
Plan	Create marketing and technology plans aligned with Agency goals/ priorities	Implementation of marketing plan with targeted strategies and technology plan to support strategic growth goals
	Increase NEC presence/ awareness in the community	Increased market share
Process	Improve the client experience	Consumer satisfaction ratings, improved intake and scheduling experience, increased utilization of telehealth
	Provide resources for staff success	Better internal access to data / reporting, better define and equip staff to meet performance goals
	Improve agency profitability	Implement expense reduction strategies

4.0 Implementation

4.1 Communication

Northeastern Center has determined that there are four audience groups with a stake or interest in the Strategic Plan, each with a varying need for details and updates about the plan:

Audience	Information Level	Method
<p>NEC Staff</p>	<p>Staff will be most interested in how the strategic plan will impact them. They will want to understand what the plan means for NEC and for their specific role. They will also want to know periodic updates as the plan is enacted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly updates to middle managers (passed down to staff) • Team all staff meetings • All staff emails / newsletters • Intranet updates
<p>NEC Board</p>	<p>The NEC Board will expect to be kept apprised of Plan progress and updates or changes to the plan. Plan progress will be measured by reporting provided via the KPI Dashboard (metrics). Additionally, the Board will conduct an annual review of Plan, including approval of any significant updates/changes</p>	<p>The Strategic Plan will be a standing agenda item at regularly scheduled Board meetings, with a quarterly in-depth review of the KPI Dashboard and a minimum of an annual review of the plan itself</p>
<p>Community Partners</p>	<p>Organizations and entities that refer to or partner with NEC will want to know how NEC will better serve the community and be the premier provider of behavioral health services because of the strategic plan. They will also be interested to learn updates on new programs, new staff, new access points (i.e. telehealth), etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases • Mailings • Presentations in the community • Annual community luncheons
<p>Consumers / Family Members</p>	<p>Consumers (existing and potential clients) and their families will want to learn updates on new programs, new staff, new access points (i.e. telehealth) that could benefit them and help meet their behavioral health needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailings • Website

4.2 Risk Assessment

Northeastern Center has identified the following as potential risks or threats to the progress of the Strategic Plan, along with possible mitigation strategies:

Risk	Mitigation / Solution
Key staff changes	<p>NEC SMT will conduct regular succession planning exercises to prepare for key staff changes. In the event of a change to a key staff member, responsibilities would be distributed (either temporarily until the position can be filled, or permanently as a growth opportunity for existing staff). Other mitigation strategies include regular cross communication and cross training to ensure depth of knowledge and coverage.</p>
Financial impact - Reimbursement changes	<p>Through involvement and rapport with the Indiana Council, as well as internal monitoring of reimbursement changes, NEC will stay aware of potential changes and be positioned to respond to them proactively rather than reactively whenever possible. Further, through relationship with an external consultant, NEC will be made aware of new funding opportunities that could bring additional revenue source diversification and protection.</p>
Regulatory changes	<p>NEC will monitor for and respond to any potential regulatory changes and/or legislative updates that will impact NEC policies or procedures.</p>
Competitive landscape changes	<p>NEC is in the process of exploring a CCBHC designation (Certified Community Behavioral Health Center), which would allow for a competitive advantage over other local competitors, as well as some additional funding opportunities. NEC can also rely on its financial strength and upcoming expansion of telehealth services as assets that will give them an advantage to respond more nimbly to market needs.</p>
Catastrophic events	<p>If a catastrophic event occurred, NEC would rely on the depth of knowledge and expertise within the staff and Board to formulate a swift and appropriate response plan. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unforeseen external forces (i.e., global pandemic) • Lawsuit or legal action
Sustainability of the Strategic Plan	<p>NEC staff are responsible for operationalizing the Strategic Plan, and therefore must make sure to move at a sustainable pace. Evaluating the Plan timeline, monitoring KPIs, frequent internal communication, and celebrating Plan progress will allow the staff to adapt and pivot if needed, as well as to stay engaged in the overall success and progress of the Strategic Plan</p>
Other	<p>NEC will utilize the depth of knowledge and expertise within the staff and Board to react accordingly and efficiently to any other risks or threats to the success of the Strategic Plan.</p>

This list is not necessarily comprehensive, but is representative of the largest risks at the time of plan documentation. Regular evaluation of risks and mitigation strategies are recommended throughout the duration of the Strategic Plan.

4.3 Plan Management

Action	Description	Frequency	Owner
Plan oversight	Overall responsibility for the implementation, integration, and success of the Strategic Plan	Ongoing	CEO
Updating KPI Dashboard	Gathering of Plan updates and preparation of the KPI Dashboard report for presentation to the NEC Board	Quarterly	CEO
Updating Action Plan	All staff with Action Items within the Plan will update the Major Strategy excel files (saved to SharePoint) with updates as they occur. The Primary Accountability leader will periodically update the Master Action Plan workbook with updates that will impact population of the KPI Dashboard	Ongoing	Individual Staff
Assessing substantial Plan variations or changes	Annually in May, the Planning Committee will review the Strategic Plan for any needed adjustments or changes. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed and approved by the Board annually in September, including incorporation of any changes to the original plan or scope. See Section 4.2 Risk Assessment for examples of things that might call for an adjustment to the Plan	Minimum of Annual review Ad-hoc review if needed	CEO
Review and reflect	NEC staff will debrief on lessons learned as the plan is operationalized and as Action Items are completed. In addition, milestones and accomplishments will be recognized and celebrated to ensure staff engagement and motivation throughout the duration of the Strategic Plan	Ongoing	CCO

5.0 Appendix A: Plan Updates

5.1 Fiscal year 2023

Q1 Update

Six (6) supporting strategies were initiated in Q1: People (3), Program (2), and Plan (1).

With People, progress was made to streamline the process and improve the timeline for application to hire for new staff as the Center is implementing a new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) expected to go live in Q2. A system for 'stay' interviews for staff is developing as well. A staff innovation program was implemented in Q1 and opportunities for top of mind awareness to promote the Center's Mission, Vision, and Shared Values are ongoing.

Under the major strategy of Program, the Community Health and Outreach Center is active with client services slated to begin in Q3. The establishment of a clear agency strategy has been achieved with the completion and Board approval of the Center's formal strategic plan. Communication occurred through internal mechanisms as well as via the Center's website and Press Release and Board communications.

Q2 Update

Three (3) additional supporting strategies were initiated in Q2: People (1) and Process (2). One of the Q1 initiatives was completed during Q2, "Create opportunities and methods to recognize staff tied to M, V, and SV." Internal staff survey concluded that 95% of staff were aware of and felt a strong connection to the Center's Mission, Vision, and Shared Values. The Center will continue to promote M, V, and SV with staff ongoing.

Great strides were made with staff recruitment and retention with efficiencies noted through implementation of new Applicant Tracking System. Additional HR support with the interview process and "stay" interviews expected in Q3.

Additional efforts to improve communication through intranet development and monthly all-staff notes; virtual town hall meetings are scheduled to begin in Q3.

Q3 Update

Three (3) supporting strategies were completed in Q3: "Create and pilot an innovation program," "Define success at an agency and individual level," and "Develop a Marketing Plan." Two (2) additional supporting strategies were initiated. Monthly virtual Town Hall meetings began in February. Number of clients served increased from Q2 by 4%.

Established baseline of sixty (60) days for current average number of days from application to hire; actions including greater familiarity with ADP recruitment module, streamlining new staff orientation, and increasing frequency of orientation will help achieve the desired thirty (30) day threshold.

Progress continues with service development at the Community Health and Outreach Center including CCBHC, Crisis Stabilization (NEC Cares), and JI Transportation (NEC Connect). Continued alignment of department marketing efforts with Center wide strategic market plan is ongoing.

Q4 Update

Two (2) supporting strategies were completed in Q4: “Develop a clear agency strategy” and “Improve intake and scheduling appointment experience.” One additional supporting strategy was initiated. Monthly virtual Town Hall meetings, all-staff notes, newsletter communications, and efforts to drive staff to the agency website continued with the overall goal to improve communication within the Center.

Progress also occurred with staff recruitment and on-boarding; a new, improved, and more frequent new staff orientation will likely go live in Q1 FY 2024 which will decrease the average number of days from application to hire. Clinical developments include streamlining the client intake process and further development of all services at the Community Health and Outreach Center.

The number of clients served Center wide increased from Q3 by 6%.

Annual review of Strategic Plan (FY 2023)

Northeastern Center’s partnership with True North to build a comprehensive, dynamic, and valuable strategic plan began in May 2021 and followed a three-step process: (1) Organizational Assessment, (2) Strategy Development, and (3) Form Action Plans, Milestones, and Key Performance Indicators. The work culminated in the Center’s strategic plan for FY 2023 – FY 2025.

Four (4) major strategies were developed as broad areas of focus: People, Program, Plan, and Process. Twenty-two supporting strategies were identified under the major strategies, each to be individually initiated over the three-year period. A total of twelve (12) supporting strategies were introduced in FY 2023 with six of those accomplished. The remaining six have been moved into the FY 2024 strategic plan along with an additional strategy involving Social Determinants of Health.

Skh – September 1, 2023

5.2 Fiscal year 2024

Q1 Updates

Q2 Updates

Q3 Updates

Q4 Updates

Annual review of Strategic Plan

5.3 Fiscal year 2025

Q1 Updates

Q2 Updates

Q3 Updates

Q4 Updates

Annual review of Strategic Plan