



# Community Services

Strategic Plan 2017-22



## Acknowledgements

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# CLARK COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES

## Strategic Plan 2017-2022

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## Message from the director



Clark County's mission is to enhance the quality of life in our diverse community by providing services with integrity, openness and accountability. Clark County Community Services has been working hard to clearly define our programs' strategic focus to align with the county's overall mission.

The department's five-year strategic plan is finally complete, and I want to thank everyone who participated in the process. This has been an inclusive, staff-led effort that included the feedback from our department's community advisory boards, as well as some county staff and their technical consultants.

Our community is becoming more diverse and has dealt with many changes in recent years. Our department's role is more important now than ever as the county strives to serve everyone to create a safer, healthier community. It's imperative that Community Services continues to use our public resources effectively and efficiently to serve our most vulnerable and help them have services and opportunities that lead to a better life.



Over the next couple of years, Community Services will focus more on the following areas:

- Making programs more outcome focused
- Using data to drive decision making
- Using an equity lens to ensure no barriers arise that prevent diverse communities from accessing services and participating fully
- Developing key strategic partnerships with providers and other systems
- Helping providers become more coordinated and integrated to improve service delivery.

In partnership with other stakeholders, I'm proud of what we have achieved over the past years. Some of those achievements include being the first region in the state to implement full Medicaid integration for mental health, substance use and physical health programs. They include helping people with intellectual disabilities find employment, recognizing more than 300 diverse youth for their accomplishments at the annual Youth Achievement Award event, and helping to

open Lincoln Place which houses people who are chronically homeless with severe disabilities.

I'm grateful to be working with such a wonderful staff and provider community who are so committed to helping and advocating for people who are disadvantaged and in need of help. I'm truly humbled and honored to be a part of the great work being done in Clark County and look forward to sharing more of our successes with the community.

Thank you.  
Sincerely,

Vanessa R. Gaston  
Clark County Community Services

## *Clark County's Mission*

*We enhance the quality of life in our diverse community by providing services with integrity, openness and accountability*

# Clark County

In early 2016, the five-member Board of County Councilors, Assessor, Auditor, Clerk, presiding District Court judge, Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer and county manager signed a Vision, Mission and Strategic Actions statement.

The document clearly states the long-term goals, everyday practices, values and principles as a cohesive community serving you. It is the foundation for countywide improvement efforts that will yield benefits both now and in the future.

The programs and services that Community Services provides aim to achieve the vision and strategic actions identified by the county as a whole. Our programs address the following Clark County vision for our community:

- Safe streets, neighborhoods and structures
- Healthy natural and built environments
- Prosperity and well-being for a diverse population
- Engaged, civil and informed citizens
- Inclusion and acceptance of all people
- First rate infrastructure; and
- A population prepared for current and future job opportunities

## Priority Based Budgeting

The Clark County Council and Budget Office embarked on a Priority Based Budgeting model in 2017. Community Services has linked Priority Based Budget categories with the program outcomes it plans to achieve. Additional detail on these budget categories and how they overlay the program functions is shown in the attached appendix.



# VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

## Our vision for Clark County is a community with:

- safe streets, neighborhoods, and structures
- healthy natural and built environments
- prosperity and well-being for a diverse population
- engaged, civil, and informed citizens
- inclusion and acceptance of all people
- first rate infrastructure
- a population and environment prepared for current and future job opportunities

Collaboration throughout the community is necessary to achieve this vision.

## The mission of Clark County government is:

We enhance the quality of life in our diverse community by providing services with integrity, openness and accountability.

Mission statements of county departments and offices of elected officials support the county's mission.

## When providing services under our mission, we act with:

- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Accountability
- Honest and civil communication
- Knowledge
- Respect for one another
- Professionalism
- Integrity

## And we aspire to achieve:

- Fiscal prudence
- Community safety
- Data-driven, science-based services
- Customer service and accountability
- Constructive partnerships and teamwork
- Skilled, innovative, diverse workforce

**Strategic actions increase success:** The county takes many actions to achieve the mission. Strategic actions, when taken countywide, make our government more efficient and effective for the long term. These strategic actions build upon and amplify actions already in place. **Our focus on strategic actions includes:**

### Community Relationships

- Increase community understanding of the services available to the public.
- Produce a continuous supply of timely, credible information, which may be positive or negative.
- Foster public participation that will build future community leaders and support current leaders.
- Understand the purpose of each partnership and its relationship to the work assignments.
- Support the public, as individuals and groups, in efforts to improve our community.
- Support county leadership's participation in community groups, activities and events.
- Leverage partnerships to expand the capacity of the county to accomplish goals.

### Customer Service

- Develop consistent, accountable, courteous, timely and predictable customer service.
- Develop clearly stated policies for customer service and accountability for implementing the policies.
- Understand our customers and their needs.
- Provide services in a culturally competent manner.
- Deliver products and services that work for internal and external consumers.

### Decision Making Process

- Base decisions on evidence, data, research, statutes and the counsel of experts.
- Consider the long-term impact, precedents set, and possible unintended consequences of decisions.
- Align decisions with a strategic plan.
- Use best practices and multidisciplinary teams to objectively evaluate big projects.
- Key stakeholders will be involved at the appropriate steps in the process.
- Build decision-making, analysis, project management and process improvement skills throughout the organization.

### Employee Relations

- Develop and retain the skills and competencies necessary for future growth and service needs.
- Promote the concept everyone can be a role model for professionalism and integrity.
- Promote diversity in the workforce through culturally competent hiring and workplace practices.
- Create a workplace that values employees and their contributions.
- Promote fair and safe workplace practices.
- Create partnerships between HR and departments to ensure knowledge and use of fair and accountable workplace practices.

### Finance

- Create a balanced budget and provide for appropriate reserves.
- Adopt and use policies that ensure long-term financial stability.
- Use strategic plans to focus the funding required to meet service and capital needs.
- Develop six-year programs for budget, capital, technology, and other key areas and understand the resources needed to fund those programs.
- Fund preservation and maintenance of existing assets before investing in new or expanded assets.
- Ensure that capital and project funding have operating support.
- Allow departments to create fund balances for future capital replacements.

### Technology

- Thoroughly analyze the financial, service, and staffing implications of technology decisions.
- Use technology to increase efficiency and effectiveness, reduce duplication, and reduce errors in county business.
- Develop priorities for investment and maintenance of technology based on explicitly agreed upon criteria.
- Increase online services.
- Use enterprise systems to reduce duplication in resource use and to leverage support skills.

## Clark County Mission Statement

We enhance the quality of life of our diverse community by providing services with integrity, openness and accountability

**WE=**  
employees,  
managers and  
elected officials

**ENHANCE=**  
a building word,  
making something  
better

**QUALITY  
OF LIFE=**  
health, safety,  
welfare, security

**DIVERSE  
COMMUNITY=**  
ages, abilities,  
interests, races,  
economic groups

**PROVIDING=**  
a doing word,  
make available,  
supply, can be  
done through  
direct services  
or contracts or  
partnerships

**SERVICES=**  
action of providing  
something  
for someone,  
someone is our  
customers both  
internal and  
externals

**INTEGRITY=**  
honest, truthful,  
whole, undivided,  
cohesive

**OPEN=**  
easy to see,  
decision making  
that is visible,  
predictable and  
understandable

**ACCOUNTABLE=**  
responsible,  
answerable,  
avenues for action  
when commitments  
are not met exist,  
upholding public  
trust

2014

*Management preliminary work and guidance*

Spring 2015

*Staff-led teams begin development of Theory of Change*

Spring 2016

*Community outreach for mission, vision and values*

Winter 2016

*Outcomes and goals identified*

Summer 2017

*Strategic plan adopted*

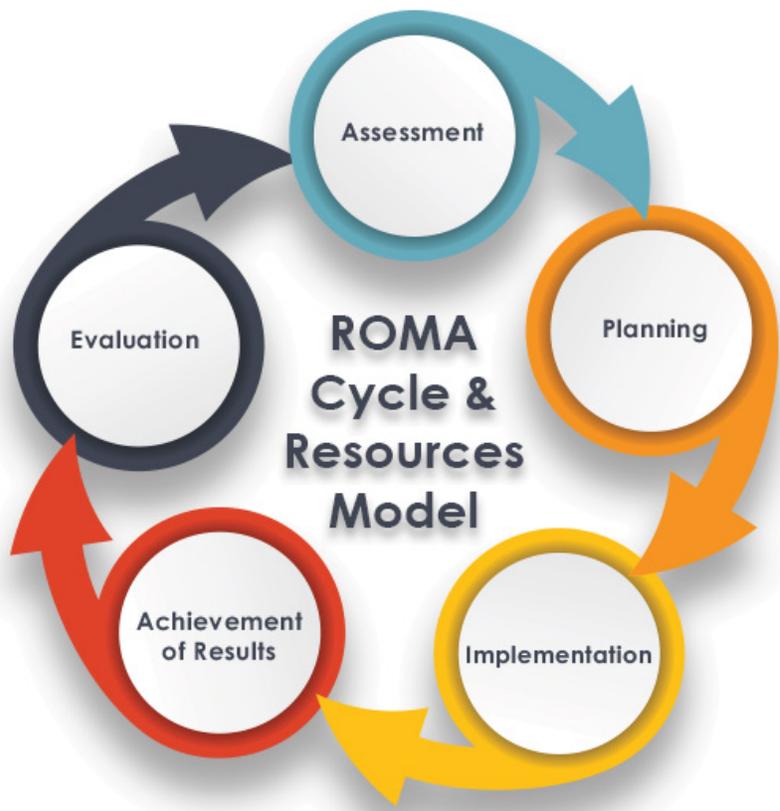
## Planning Process

This strategic plan is the result of a process that had participation from every member of the department. Over three years of teamwork led to the development of outcomes and steps this department will strive to achieve over the next five years.

This plan is a living document that will be updated annually based on evaluation of community needs and results achieved.

### Results-Oriented Management and Accountability

Community Services has two Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) certified trainers on staff. ROMA provides direction on how an agency should assess, plan, implement and evaluate the programs and services it provides. Every three years, a community survey and Assessment of Needs is conducted to determine what households with low-incomes are experiencing and what programs can best suit their situations. This broad community process includes input from service providers, community members, businesses and elected officials. The assessment informs the planning, which in turn directs the programs to implement. Each year, the department evaluates its program services and reports back to the community and funders about the results achieved.





# Community Services Mission, Vision and Values

Community Services holds a key role in our community – providing federal, state and local funding to the county’s most vulnerable people. The department serves a wide range of needs, including homelessness assistance, behavioral health crisis and prevention services, employment and early intervention for those with developmental disabilities, youth support programs and community development activities.



Community Services’ mission, vision and values were developed through a collaborative process with staff, advisory boards and community members reviewing and providing input. The following were adopted in April 2016:

### Mission

Clark County Department of Community Services supports, through partnerships, all people in our community to increase their well-being and economic security.

### Vision

We work to create a thriving community where people are valued and have the resources they need to flourish.

### Values

- People
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Accountability
- Education
- Positivity
- Innovation

*Demographics of those completing the Survey of Needs:*

### *Age*

*Responses came from people of all age groups: 12-17, 24-44, 45-54, 55-69 and 70 and older, with the majority from the 24-44 age range.*

### *Race*

*When compared to the most recent American Community Survey data on race in Clark County, the distribution of responses was quite similar to the responses received in the survey.*

### *Employment*

*Among households answering the question about employment, 67% indicated that at least one person was employed.*

# Community Needs Assessment

The Community Needs Assessment, or CNA, is an in-depth analysis completed every three years to learn about the needs of people living in poverty. CNA is a requirement of the Community Services Block Grant Act, which provides federal money to the county for work on anti-poverty initiatives. The assessment includes information gathered through different means:

- Data from households that are low-income through a Survey of Needs
- Data from the American Community Survey federal data collection program
- A community feedback forum; and other local agencies' needs assessments

## Survey of Needs

Clark County received 1,165 responses to a Survey of Needs of low-income households, which was distributed through a partnership of more than 65 programs, the media and community presentations.

## Community feedback forum

A community forum held in May 2017 was based on initial data from the Survey of Needs. The public provided feedback through presentations, a data walk and small group discussions. The community conversations focused on the causes and conditions of poverty in Clark County, and the presentations were educational opportunities for both the public and staff.

## Next steps

Clark County uses information collected in the Community Needs Assessment to understand the needs in our community, inform our future funding decisions, and guide our policy and program decisions. We hope that other agencies will find this information similarly useful. The final report will be completed in late 2017.

# Survey of Needs

Through the Survey of Needs, several needs were identified in each of six domains:

- Housing
- Health and Social/Behavioral Health
- Employment
- Income and Asset Building
- Education
- Support Services

The following table ranks the categories based on frequency of need indicated and includes the top three needs in each domain.

DOMAIN	RESPONSES
<b>Housing</b> Affordable/subsidized housing – 319 Rent assistance – 293 Move-in cost assistance – 237	617
<b>Health and Social/Behavioral Health</b> Seeing a dentist - 270 Food assistance/food banks - 184 Exercise/fitness classes - 158	604
<b>Employment</b> Getting a better job - 268 Finding a job - 241 Items to become/remain employed - 223	532
<b>Income and Asset Building</b> Credit repair - 224 Financial assistance to buy a home - 172 Obtaining/maintaining benefits - 131	468
<b>Education</b> Financial assistance to go to college - 218 Applying for financial aid/scholarships - 156 College/trade/apprenticeships - 146	449
<b>Support Services</b> Transportation - 175 Legal assistance - 134 Information and referral services - 114	416

*The graphic developed to show the four themes overlapping was purposeful; many of our programs are holistic and achieve multiple outcomes in people's lives.*

*While stable households contribute to a resilient community, community improvements, economic advancement and well-being are all important components for a household to remain stable.*



## Goals developed

The four department themes encompass services that are now provided:

- Housing stability
- Economic development
- Well-being
- Connected and resilient community

After these areas were established, staff-led teams worked to develop outcomes in each goal area.

# Theme focus

The four department themes are summarized as follows:

## Housing stability

Programs that help households access and stay in housing and support the homeless crisis response system.

## Economic advancement

Programs that help people gain or increase employment and help people learn fiscal responsibility and gain more education.

## Resilient community

Programs that create neighborhood improvements, increase social networks and leadership development.

## Well-being

Programs that focus on a person's mental, behavioral and physical health and promote household safety and positive youth development.

### *Recent work toward outcome*

*Lincoln Place, Clark County's initial Housing First complex, opened in 2016. The 30 units in downtown Vancouver were funded by Clark County, city of Vancouver, Vancouver Housing Authority and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.*

*The tenants are people who previously were chronically homeless and struggled with substance use or mental illness. No services or engagement are required of tenants, but multiple service providers and resources are available on-site for those who choose to use them.*

## Housing stability

Community Services supports housing stability to meet Clark County's vision of:

- Safe streets, neighborhoods and structures
- Healthy natural and built environments
- Prosperity and well-being for a diverse population
- Inclusion and acceptance of all people

Our outcome is to reduce and prevent homelessness in Clark County by improving or creating access to safe, stable and affordable housing.





## Housing programs

A variety of housing stability programs are funded through Community Services, including

- Homeless emergency shelters
- Time-limited rental assistance
- Temporary housing
- Permanent housing
- Homeless system coordination
- Housing stability services and outreach
- Housing support services for veterans who are low income
- Utility assistance for low-income people
- Assistance to weatherize homes for low-income people
- Housing support services for mental health and substance use population
- Affordable housing
- Community development for low-income neighborhoods



### *Recent work toward outcome*

*In 2016, 213 people with intellectual or developmental disabilities were employed by Clark County businesses. They earned more than \$1.6 million, at least some of which went back into the local economy.*

*As an employer, Clark County pledged to double the number of people with developmental or intellectual disabilities in supported employment jobs in the county workforce. The county fulfilled that pledge; it now has eight supported positions in Public Works, Facilities, Community Services, Technology Services and the Treasurer's Office.*

## Economic advancement

Community Services supports economic advancement to meet Clark County's vision of:

- Prosperity and well-being for a diverse population
- Inclusion and acceptance of all people
- A population and environment prepared for current and future job opportunities

Our outcome is to reduce the number of people living in poverty by promoting employment, educational success and support services.

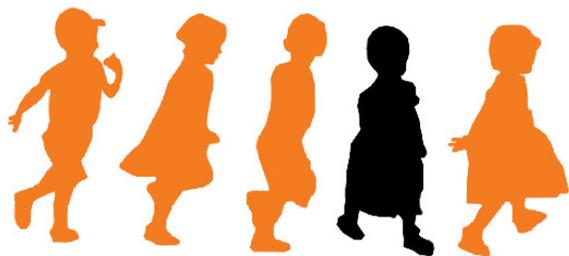




## Economic advancement programs

A variety of economic advancement programs are funded through Community Services, including:

- Youth mental health and substance use prevention services
- Mental health and substance use treatment and recovery support services
- Programs to help reduce poverty
- Intellectual and developmental disabilities support services



**1 IN 5 CHILDREN LIVES IN POVERTY**

### *Recent work toward outcome*

*In 2016, Clark and Skamania counties became early adopters of integrated health care. The existing Substance Abuse and Mental Health Advisory Boards became the new Behavioral Health Advisory Board.*

*The Behavioral Health Advisory Board includes members of the previous advisory boards and new community members. A majority of members are or have been consumers of behavioral health services. They advise and make recommendations to the Southwest Accountable Community of Health about areas related to behavioral health and help ensure programs and policies are responsive to consumer and community health needs.*

## Well-being

Community Services supports well-being to meet Clark County's vision of:

- Prosperity and well-being for a diverse population
- Healthy natural and built environments
- Inclusion and acceptance of all people.

**Our outcome is to increase access to services to improve the safety, health and well-being of vulnerable populations.**





## Well-being programs

A variety of programs that contribute to a person's mental and physical well-being are funded through Community Services, including:

- Youth mental health and substance use prevention services
- Mental health and substance use treatment and recovery support services
- Mental health and substance use crisis stabilization and detention services
- Programs to help reduce poverty
- Homeless emergency shelters
- Time-limited rental assistance
- Temporary housing
- Permanent supportive housing
- Housing stability services and outreach
- Homeless system coordination
- Affordable housing
- Community development for low-income neighborhoods
- Utility assistance for low-income households
- Weatherization assistance for low-income households
- Housing support services for veterans who are low income
- Nutrition support services for veterans who are low income
- Health improvement support services for veterans who are low income
- General support services for veterans who are low income
- Intellectual or developmental disabilities support services

## Connected and resilient community

### *Recent work toward outcome*

*The Clark County Parent Coalition recently developed Foundations of Leadership and Advocacy for parents of children with intellectual or developmental disabilities whose primary language is Spanish. As part of this, each participant developed a leadership project.*

### *Projects included:*

- *Coordination of an all-inclusive dance program for kids*
- *Joining the Family Leadership and Involvement sub-committee and Clark County Interagency Coordinating Council*
- *Taking the Helping Parent Training and joining the Helping Parent statewide list*
- *Completing an autism awareness segment on the local Spanish news channel*

Community Services supports a connected and resilient community to meet Clark County's vision of:

- Inclusion and acceptance of all people
- First rate infrastructure
- Healthy natural and built environments
- Safe streets, neighborhoods, and structures
- Engaged and informed citizens.

Our outcomes are to increase or maintain the livability of neighborhoods and increase citizen engagement and leadership opportunities





## Resilient community programs

A variety of resilient community programs are funded through Community Services. All programs strive to create social networks, trust and community participation.

The following programs help create a well-maintained and safe community and/or increase transportation options:

- Youth leadership/civic engagement – Teen Talk, Youth Commission, STASHA
- Mental health and substance use crisis stabilization and detention services
- Programs to help reduce poverty
- Homeless emergency shelters
- Time-limited rental assistance
- Temporary housing
- Permanent supportive housing
- Housing stability services and outreach
- Homeless system coordination
- Affordable housing
- Community development for low-income neighborhoods
- Utility assistance for low-income households
- Weatherization assistance for low-income households
- Housing support services for veterans who are low income
- Nutrition support services for veterans who are low income
- Health improvement support services for veterans who are low income
- General support services for veterans who are low income
- Intellectual or developmental disabilities support services





**Data collection: 0-5 years**

Increase department capacity to be able to universally collect, analyze and report on unduplicated data, particularly across systems.

**Outcome focus: 0-18 months**

Increase outcome-based contracting. Start by establishing a baseline and moving away from outputs.

**Staff development: 0-1 year**

Create opportunities for staff to learn, develop outcomes and evaluate progress in a safe environment. Increase focus on equity and diversity across programs. Celebrate accomplishments.

**Outreach and engagement: 0-1 year**

Increase outreach and engagement of those we serve, including the promotion of cross-system collaboration and integration. Increase transparency through communication with community.

**Program-specific activities: Ongoing**

Fund best-practice, culturally aware, outcome-based programs and ensure staff and providers are adequately trained to implement. Be flexible and responsive to community needs as they arise.

*Intermediate steps*

*Throughout the planning process, staff identified focus areas where the department can grow over the next five years. A program manager is heading up each area and working to meet timelines developed by staff.*

*To stay on track, managers will report progress at all staff meetings and the next steps will be updated as needed.*

*Our department's role is more important now than ever as the county strives to serve everyone to create a safer, healthier community.*

Vanessa Gaston  
Community Services Director



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