

One Journey: 2023-2025 Strategic Plan

Approved by Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County Board of Directors on February 27, 2023

Contents

Introduction	3
Organizational Planning	3
Results Oriented Management and Accountability	5
Mission, Vision, and Values	6
Project Outline	7
Establish Project Framework	
Learn & Understand	10
Sociohistorical Scan of Hennepin County	10
Community Meal	
Pop-Up Events	
Community Engagement by the Numbers	
Shape & Build	
Insights Development	14
Strategy Workshops	
Strategic Conversations	21
Shaping Strategic Direction	
Activate	
Plan Creation	23
CAP-HC's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan	24
Acknowledgments	

Introduction

Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County (CAP-HC) is an independent, anti-poverty non-profit. We fight poverty holistically by connecting people with lower incomes to a broad range of services, including energy assistance, vehicle repair assistance, rental assistance, financial wellness education, employment readiness training, and more. These services help people stabilize—and help them learn new skills and build assets so they can pave their own path to prosperity.

CAP-HC is one of over 1,000 state and federally certified Community Action organizations that make up the Community Action Partnership Network. The national network is dedicated to ending poverty in the United States. While all member organizations are governed by the same set of organizational standards, they each seek community input to understand and address the specific factors that cause and reinforce poverty in the geographic area they serve.

ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING

The national network's organizational standards¹ regarding organizational planning outline three components in the process. First, a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) must be conducted every three years to determine the overall needs and resources within the organization's service area. The second part of the planning process, strategic planning, should be conducted every three to five years. The Strategic Plan sets the broad goals that guide the organization's programs and operations to meet the needs of people with lower incomes. CAP-HC goes through the strategic planning process every three years to align with our CNA cycle. Because the CNA and strategic planning happen concurrently, community input informs organizational planning "in real time." This approach, referred to as "One Journey," ensures that the changing needs of people with lower incomes in Hennepin County are at the center of organizational planning. The third component of organizational planning is creating a Community Action Plan to detail the specific activities CAP-HC will engage in over the year as guided by the CNA and Strategic Plan. Each year for the duration of the Strategic Plan, an annual Action Plan is created so that there is measurable progress toward strategic goals.



¹ Source: Organizational Standards Technical Assistance Guide—Category 6: Strategic Planning published by National Community Action Partnership

CAP-HC's previous strategic plan spanned the years 2020 through 2022. During the second half of 2022 and into early 2023, CAP-HC staff and board worked with Imagine Deliver, a Minneapolis-based consulting firm, to go through the One Journey process that resulted in the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. Throughout the One Journey process, the One Journey Work Group—comprised of twelve staff members and two board members—met four times to create and execute the project plan. For the CNA, Imagine Deliver conducted a sociohistorical scan of Hennepin County, held a community meal engagement event for CAP-HC clients, and gathered input from community members at two pop-up events. At two half-day workshops, the Work Group, full Leadership Team, and full Board of Directors reviewed learnings from the CNA and discussed the organization's strategic direction. Following the workshops, the Leadership Team met four more times to discuss program offerings, resource allocation, the client experience, and current decisions and future trends in depth.



Leadership staff synthesized these inputs to finalize the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan. The Board of Directors approved the plan on February 27, 2023. Staff and board will review it semi-annually. Additionally, staff leadership used the plan to inform CAP-HC's 2023 Action Plan and will use it to create our 2024 and 2025 Action Plans.

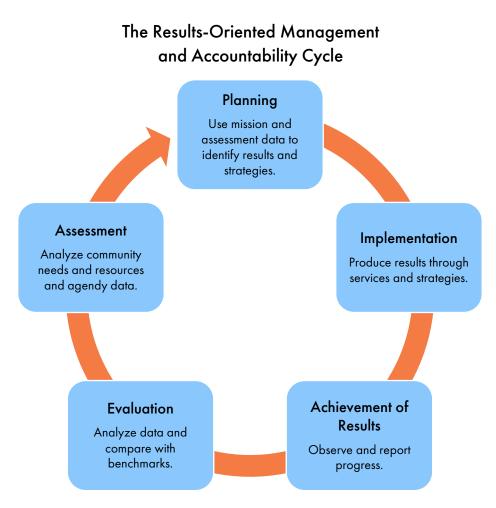
RESULTS ORIENTED MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In addition to standardizing the organizational planning process, the Community Action Network also provides a framework for continuous growth and improvement across all member organizations. The framework, known as Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA)², was adopted in 1998.

A supplemental system for continuous quality improvement was established and adopted by the Network in 2018. Named ROMA Next Generation (ROMA NG), this system enables the consistent measurement, analysis, and communication about member organization performance toward three performance indicators:

- People with lower incomes are stable and achieve economic security.
- Communities where people with lower incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.
- People with lower incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in their communities.

As a continuous learning and improvement organization, CAP-HC's 2023-2025 Strategic and 2023 Action Plans include tangible, realistic, specific, and measurable goals that align with the ROMA and ROMA NG accountability frameworks.



² Sources: Organizational Standards Technical Assistance Guide—Category 4: Organizational Leadership published by National Community Action Partnership; Improving Performance, Scoring Success: Using Balanced Scorecards for Organizational Excellence published by National Community Action Partnership

Mission, Vision, and Values



MISSION

Partner with community to provide effective and responsive services to reduce the impact of poverty in Hennepin County.

VISION

Hennepin County without poverty.



Building Relationships



Creating Opportunities



Eliminating Barriers



Equity and Inclusion



Responsible Stewardship



Strengthening Community

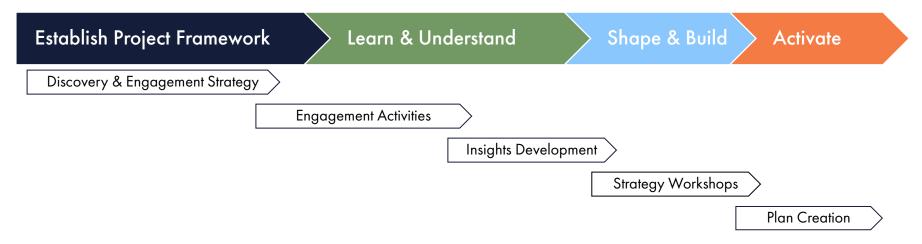
Project Outline

PROJECT PURPOSE

CAP-HC went through its "One Journey" organizational planning process for integrated strategy development. This planning process integrates learnings from a 2022 Community Needs Assessment into a Strategic Plan spanning the three-year period from 2023 through 2025. Working with the One Journey Work Group, Imagine Deliver designed and executed a project plan that explored common experiences of people with lower incomes and used learnings from those community members to develop a strategy to close opportunity gaps and increase financial security of Hennepin County residents.

Imagine Deliver's community-driven design process integrated community perspective and participation from start to finish of the One Journey process.

ONE JOURNEY PROJECT PLAN



PROJECT GOALS

- Create a grounding analysis of the social and geographic history underlying local poverty.
- Host a targeted set of community pop-ups to surface candid, generative supplemental insights.
- Facilitate strategy and design workshops for CAP-HC staff, board, and community.
- Create an actionable, integrated strategy that is informed by the needs of Hennepin County residents.

Establish Project Framework

DISCOVERY & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Learning Priorities

CAP-HC and Imagine Deliver reviewed Client Satisfaction Survey data and previous CNA reports, then met with key stakeholders to analyze and discuss the information. From these conversations, the team created three learning priorities.

Community Values, Beliefs, and Assets Understand the individual and shared assets and strengths that CAP-HC clients leverage in place of, or to supplement, the resources they receive. We want to learn more about what skills and informal networks community members utilize when formal options fall short of their needs.

Navigating Crisis
Management

Understand how community members interact with CAP-HC services, as well as the services provided by other similar organizations. We'd like to identify gaps in resources or programs and opportunities to highlight resources/programs that have been working well across the county.

Future Dreams of Prosperity

Understand the aspirations of community members in order for organizations to move beyond meeting community members' basic needs into a place of building opportunities for prosperity.

Engagement Activities

These learning priorities guided the structure of engagement activities for the Community Needs Assessment which included three types of engagement activities.

Sociohistorical Scan

A sociohistorical scan is a deep dive into secondary quantitative data to gather the context necessary to understand the data, histories, and theories of a systemic issue. This context informs the approach and strategy during the engagement period.

Community Meal

A community meal is a radically hosted community listening session that brings community members together to share their wisdom and connect with one another. The community meal for this engagement effort was for current CAP-HC clients and took place at New Rules, located in Minneapolis.

Community Pop-Up

A community pop-up event is an engaging and accessible way to learn from community genius by meeting community where they are, physically and through design. The two pop-up events for this engagement effort were in collaboration with trusted community organizations.

Learn & Understand

SOCIOHISTORICAL SCAN OF HENNEPIN COUNTY

The social and historical context of our geographic location is crucial to formulating thoughtful decisions and reimagining our future. To set the context and prime a robust strategic engagement, Imagine Deliver completed a sociohistorical analysis of Hennepin County to better understand the social determinants of poverty and barriers to wealth generation.

The scan was designed to answer one central question:

• What are the some of greatest determinants that affect those experiencing poverty in Hennepin County?

What We Learned from the Sociohistorical Scan³

Research uncovered five historical topics that still inform local realities today and should be considered thoughtfully as we endeavor to build something better:

- Colonial History of Minnesota The Violent Acquisition of Sacred Land
- Anti-Black Policies that Displaced Communities Housing Policies, Homeownership, and Displacement
- Environmental Injustice Environmental Health Equity for Communities Affected by Poverty
- History of Labor Exploitation in Minnesota Slavery and Labor Exploitation
- Opportunity Gaps in Education and Skills Acquisition Disparities in Education and Resources

³ For additional details from the sociohistorical scan of Hennepin County, refer to the 2022 Community Needs Assessment or download a copy of the scan here: <u>Download the Sociohistorical Scan of Hennepin County</u>.

COMMUNITY MEAL

The community meal allowed the project team to build upon the current relationship CAP-HC has with their clients and strengthen the trust necessary to elicit responses that move beyond understanding basic needs toward sharing dreams and solutions for prosperity.

Community Meal Questions

Using the three learning priorities established for the One Journey project, Imagine Deliver asked community meal attendees, who were all CAP-HC clients, the following questions.

Community Values, Beliefs, and Assets	Navigating Crisis Management Services	Future Dreams of Prosperity
My stability and the stability of my family comes from these three things:,	What is the first thing you would change about crisis services if you were in charge? What would you want to stay the same?	If you had the power to build a future where everyone had all of their needs met, what would you do?
When I am in crisis, I know that I can count on	What needs do you have that you haven't found resources for?	I could build a better future for myself and my family if I knew how to
Despite living with low income, I feel like I have abundance in	Which organizations provide the most reliable availability for services that fit your needs? (Follow Up) What organizations could CAP-HC learn from?	If all of my bills were paid for a year, I would finally be able to
Is there anything that you think is important about navigating crisis situations that people often forget?	Do you believe that your current financial situation has been improved, made worse, or stayed the same after receiving COVID-19 aid? Why do you believe your current financial situation has been improved/ made worse/stayed the same?	

POP-UP EVENTS

The pop-ups were also focused on deep engagement. They acted as a bridge to those who live in areas with a high need for CAP-HC services. Imagine Deliver implemented a collaborative approach with local organizations that have deep roots in their communities to gather insights from community members. Imagine Deliver utilized naturally occurring traffic, incentives, and colorful signage to bring people in and encourage participation. The events were held in Brooklyn Park and Bloomington, suburbs with large numbers of community members who live with low income and economic instability. Pop-up Engagements were offered in both English and Spanish.

Pop-Up Event Questions

Using the three learning priorities established for the One Journey project, Imagine Deliver asked pop-up event attendees, a mix of community members and CAP-HC clients, the following questions.

Community Values, Beliefs, and Assets	Navigating Crisis Management Services	Future Dreams of Prosperity
When I am in crisis, I know that I can count on	What needs do you have that you haven't found resources for?	If all of my bills were paid for a year, I would finally be able to
When government services fail me, my community and I have learned to	Do you believe that your current financial situation has been improved, made worse, or stayed the same after receiving COVID-19 aid? Why do you believe your current financial situation has been improved/ made worse/stayed the same?	If you had the power to build a future where everyone had all of their needs met, what would you do?

⁴ For Pop-Up Participant Demographics, refer to the 2022 Community Needs Assessment.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

In total, 61 Hennepin County residents—some being current CAP-HC clients—participated in the "Learning Together" phase of the Community Needs Assessment.



61 Community Participants



20 Video Interviews



\$1,700 Incentive Dollars Distributed

Shape & Build

INSIGHTS DEVELOPMENT

The following themes and insights were developed from the information and wisdom community members and clients shared with us, research, and organizational context⁵.

Themes	Insights	
Information and Relationships Are Powerful	Behind Us Is a Village: Community Networks Lift Us	
Tools of Social Capital	Resource information as an Asset: Increasing Resource Accessibility	
A Holistic Approach as a Pathway to Systems Change	Poverty in Layers: Compounding Factors Stack on Top of Economic Instability	
	Uproot Economic Instability: From Short- Term Solutions to Long-Term Wealth Building	
More Choice & Autonomy	I Have a Dream: Reclaiming Time and Livelihood	

⁵ For additional details about these themes and insights, refer to the 2022 Community Needs Assessment.

STRATEGY WORKSHOPS

As part of the Shape & Build phase of the project, CAP-HC's full Leadership Team and Board of Directors were invited to join the One Journey Work Group for two half-day strategy workshops led by Imagine Deliver.

Strategy Workshop 1

The first workshop had four components:

- Grounding activity Attendees responded to the following three prompts:
 - O What threatens our ability to achieve an equitable and thriving Hennepin County without poverty?
 - o How has the pandemic shifted the needs of CAP-HC clients and communities we work with?
 - O Please finish this sentence: "Hennepin County would be the best place to live in the Midwest if only _____."
- Reviewing the Results of the Sociohistorical Scan of Hennepin County
- Aligning around CAP-HC's Mission, Vision, and Values
 - o Attendees used storytelling to explore how their personal values aligned with CAP-HC's value.
 - o Teams discussed the mission and vision statements in teams and then with the full group.
- Identifying Key Service Users Teams developed fictional characters that represented different client identities, traits, and situations, enabling exploration of the specific needs and desires of a person rather than an abstract idea.

Sample of Grounding Activity Answers

What threatens our ability to achieve an equitable and thriving Hennepin County without Poverty?

- Living wage jobs
- Staffing shortage
- The lack of getting "the right" people to the table
- Systems that are inherently biased/inequitable (e.g., justice system, healthcare)
- Funding
- Lack of collaboration

- So many needs to address
- Lack of trust in public institutions
- "Affordable" housing
- Political in-fighting and disagreements
- Racial disparities at just about every level
- Public safety and justice for all

How has the pandemic shifted the needs of CAP-HC clients or the communities we work with?

- Urgency and criticality of services has increased
- A greater need for mental health/wellness to address
- Virtual services
- More technology needs in order to function

- Opportunistic increases in the cost of basic needs
- On brink of truly falling off financial edge
- More unemployment/under-employment
- Identified gaps in services
- Made them less mobile

Please finish this sentence: "Hennepin County would be the best place to live in the Midwest if only ____."

- Addressed public safety
- Collaborative mindset
- Everyone had equitable access to quality education
- Paradigm change in public safety institutions
- The "Haves" would help the "Have Nots" more effectively

- We acknowledge systemic roots of disparity
- More equal opportunities for all
- More affordable housing options
- Racial disparities → Racial equity
- People believed poverty could be eliminated

Identifying Key Service Users – Sample of Team Drawings and Notes

Client is a Single parent of two children under 5 years old.	Client is a senior over 65 years old.	Client is undocumented.	Client is frequently unhoused or in unstable housing.
COLUMN WARDER WARDER OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR		Herselits (Manual and Manual and	PT Job Tanget On Moved one Six all Promise one Six all Promise one one one one one one one one one on
Name: Sam	Name: Elder	Name: Patrees	Name: Mami
Description:	Description:	Description:	Description:
 Works two jobs, sore feet 	Not employed	 Hispanic woman drawn as a 	 Young mother to a young
Two children	 Active in religious community 	tree to symbolize deep roots	child
 Whole bunch of worries, 	Live in low-income senior	in her community	Moves a lot
single parent	apartments	o Mid 40s	No transportation
Strengths and assets: Decilion assets:	No children living with them	Needs resources, like public	Strengths and assets:She is determined!
ResiliencySmile on their face because	 Disability, chronic condition, depressed 	transportation to get to work Strengths and assets:	She is determined:She keeps fighting
they can keep it all together	On fixed income	Really great at finding joy	
s, can keep ii aii legemer	Strengths and assets:	Hardworking	
	 They have lived experience 	o Tenacious	
	that they are willing to share		

Strategy Workshop 2

The second workshop had four components:

- Grounding Activity Workshop attendees responded to the following three prompts:
 - O What area of wealth building do you think is most important?
 - When thinking about economic instability it is most important to consider the intersection between class and ______.
 - o I would feel like CAP-HC has made a significant impact if we are able to accomplish _____ in the next 3 years.
- Building Momentum Teams were asked to capture the current state of CAP-HC and brainstorm priorities for the next 3-year strategic direction by answering the following three questions:
 - O What is new and unique about CAP-HC?
 - O What should we stop doing at CAP-HC?
 - O What should we start doing at CAP-HC?
- Identifying Key Considerations
 - Working from the list of ideas for current and emerging priorities generated from the previous activity, teams placed each idea in one of four quadrants to indicate its level of importance and depth of impact.
 - Each team selected their top 5 priorities from the Long-Term Impact/More Important quadrant, then shared their top 5 priorities with the full group.
- Prototyping & Building
 - Teams took their Top 5 priorities and added considerations for who needs to be included, what resources are needed, and processes involved to move priorities forward.
 - o From these considerations, teams first drew and then constructed 3-dimensional representations of their priorities.

Sampling of Grounding Activity Answers

What area of wealth building do you think is most important?

- Home ownership
- Education on wealth building, financial literacy, and obtaining assets
- Credit information

- Livable wage/higher employment and opportunity
- Generational wealth
- Debt forgiveness
- Free higher education

When thinking about economic instability it is most important to consider the intersection between class and _____

- Access to resources and opportunity
- Race / Ethnicity
- Gender identity

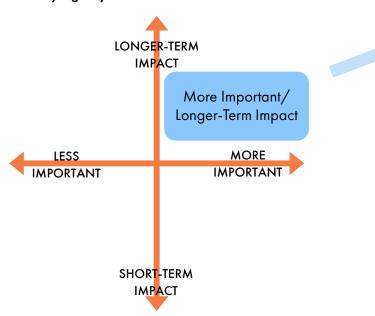
- Geography
- Education
- Generational poverty

I would feel like CAP-HC has made a significant impact if we are able to accomplish _____ in the next 3 years.

- Staffing stability and capacity
- Diversifying our revenue so that we may have the capacity to help more people
- Successful program outcomes
- Existing program stability and growth

- Increased client impact (outcomes) and/or reach
- High number of clients reporting economic stability
- A way to measure long-term impact (are we helping people lift themselves out of poverty?)

Identifying Key Considerations



Top 5 Priorities Identified

- Partnerships Strengthen CAP-HC's network of community partners so we can collectively fill in the gaps in community needs and wealth building
- Community Engagement Meet community members where they are and build relationships with them in order to understand their needs first-hand rather than assuming we know what their needs are
- Responsive and Consistent Programming Streamline and prioritize programs allowing CAP-HC to be responsive to the needs of the community, including transparent and accessible application processes
- Staff Development Increase team and staff capacity; provide core skill building and training
- **Diversity and Flexibility of Funding** Expand our financial resources and diversify our funding portfolio to increase our ability to be nimble and responsive to changing community needs

Prototyping & Building Images

One example of a drawing and 3-dimensional representation of the Top 5 Priorities identified.





STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS

Following the strategy workshops, the Leadership Team met four more times to discuss program offerings, resource allocation, the client experience, and current decisions and future trends in depth.

Program Offerings

After a brief recap of the 2020, 2021, and 2022 CNAs, leadership staff discussed program offerings, capabilities and process improvements, and program impact with the following questions as prompts:

- How do changes in community needs impact CAP-HC's program offerings?
- Are there any new programs to be considered based on community needs?
- What capabilities or process improvement does CAP-HC need to respond to current community needs?
- How do we quantify CAP-HC's impact on clients?
- How do we use that information to evolve our approach to programs and/or referrals?

Resource Allocation

Leadership staff discussed resource allocation through the lenses of people served and programs offered using the following questions to prompt discussion:

- Is our aim to maximize the number of people served (with likely tradeoff of reduced spending per household) or to drive deeper impact per household (with likely tradeoff of fewer people served)?
- Is our approach different for some programs than others?
- Are there other variables that have bearing on our approach?
- How does CAP-HC balance program depth versus breadth? This has implications for the number of programs offered, staffing allocation, number of people served by each program, etc.
- How can we ensure program alignment with community need?
- How many programs can CAP-HC manage effectively?

Client Experience

Staff leadership used the following questions to prompt discussion about client experience and service delivery:

- What can be done to continue improving the client experience?
- How should changes in community needs impact service delivery?

Current Decisions and Future Trends

Staff leadership discussed the following questions:

- How do we ensure we are making current decisions with an eye to future trends? E.g., remote work policy, new office locations.
- How do we truly move people out of poverty?

SHAPING STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Using the inputs gathered through the One Journey process, CAP-HC and Imagine Deliver worked together to draft a strategic direction. This draft outlined key focus areas and initiatives that would support emerging organizational priorities over the next three years.

One Journey Inputs

- Sociohistorical Scan of Hennepin County
- Insights from Community Meal and Pop-Up Events
- Notes and Data from Strategy Workshops
- Takeaways from Strategic Conversations

Organizational Priorities

- Aligning Program Operations for Community Impact
- Building Community Wealth Through Collaboration
- Affecting Policy to Build Momentum for Systemic Change
- Activating Change through Robust Funding Development
- Investing in Team Members for a Thriving CAP-HC

Activate

PLAN CREATION

One Journey Work Group members gathered feedback on the drafted strategic direction in late January 2023. CAP-HC leadership reviewed and approved the proposed strategic direction at their meeting on February 15. The Board of Directors reviewed the strategic direction at their monthly meeting on February 23.

The board formally approved the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan that follows on February 27, 2023. Staff and board will review it semi-annually. Additionally, staff leadership used the plan to inform CAP-HC's 2023 Action Plan and will use it to create subsequent Action Plans for 2024 and 2025.

CAP-HC'S 2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

KEY FOCUS AREAS AND SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

1 Aligning Program Operations for Community Impact

Center human dignity in the delivery of programs focused on short and long-term collective impact

- a. Deliver a multi-channel service experience for CAP-HC clients that is human-centered, culturally informed, timely and accessible to those of all backgrounds, considering location, language, race, ethnicity, and different ability needs.
- b. Streamline client intake process and standardize best practices from CAP-HC core programs where possible.
- c. Support organizational responsiveness by embedding continuous feedback loops that allow CAP-HC clients to share knowledge and staff to document trends.
- d. Use ROMA Next Generation performance indicators to analyze outcomes across different attributes, such as county location, racial and ethnic groups.
- 2 Building Community Wealth Through Collaboration

Promoting an environment for community prosperity that maximizes resource access for all

- a. Partner with complementary service and other poverty alleviation organizations to establish a robust referral process to address client needs from a holistic perspective, including access to food, health, and legal resources (among others).
- b. Deepen partnership with Hennepin County Family Service Collaboratives to foster inter-organizational referrals and community resource sharing.
- c. Address public safety concerns through collaboration and partnership with community-led initiatives.
- 3 Affecting Policy to Build Momentum for Systemic Change

Addressing the root causes of poverty as a collective effort

- a. Develop a shared policy agenda with other similar or complementary organizations.
- b. Continue to collaborate with community advocacy organizations and coalitions and apply for funding opportunities jointly, where possible.
- c. Seek to engage in community-academic research partnerships to support thought leadership and policy change narratives.
- d. Provide opportunities for CAP-HC staff and clients to share their stories as part of a comprehensive media communications effort to raise awareness around poverty alleviation impact initiatives, centering community voices.

- 4 Activating Change through Robust Funding Development
 - Diversify funding and grow unrestricted revenue to increase sustainability and maximize program flexibility and impact
 - a. Increase board engagement in resource development efforts.
 - b. Refine a targeted grant prospecting and vetting process, including expanding corporate and foundation relationship-building activities.
 - c. Produce a funding case statement that highlights CAP-HC's impact, core programs, and an inspiring vision for the future that is grounded in the community's greatest needs.
- 5 Investing in Team Members for a Thriving CAP-HC

Foster a vibrant and positive environment where staff can expand their capabilities and utilize their unique advantages as they further CAP-HC's mission

- a. Unify organization around CAP-HC's aspirational organizational culture values, including Trust, Organizational Stability, Kindness, Accountability, Reliability, Respect, and a Transparent Structure.
- b. Create a culture of high performance that rewards staff for meeting organizational and departmental standards of excellence.
- c. Attract and retain top talent through a focus on employee development as well as a competitive compensation and benefits package.

Acknowledgments

CAP-HC is grateful to the community members who shared their experiences with us. Without their input, we would be missing a vitally important voice in our organizational planning work.

Thank you to our consulting partner, Imagine Deliver, for their thoughtful, community-centered approach to the One Journey process.

Special thanks to our community pop-up partners:

- City of Brooklyn Park's Health on the Go Program
 A community-driven project to promote health equity in Brooklyn Park.
- VEAP: Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People The Twin Cities' largest food pantry.
- Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center
 A faith-based non-profit supporting the well-being of Muslims across the Twin Cities Metro area.

The stewardship and support of One Journey Work Group members, CAP-HC staff, and CAP-HC Board of Directors made this One Journey process possible.

One Journey Work Group:

- Allen Rezac
- Amelia Barkley
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- Allen Rezac, Vice Chair
- Tyanna Bryant, Secretary
- Kevin Myren, Treasurer
- Naweed Ahmadzai
- Commissioner Kevin Anderson, representing the seventh district in Hennepin County

- Victoria Chambers
- Aisha Chughtai, Council Member
- Justin Gillette
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