

NEBRASKA
Head Start
ASSOCIATION



Strategic Plan Report

June 7, 2023

MISSION MATTERS

CONTENT:

Strategic Focus and Aims	2
Process	3
Organizational Identity and Agenda	4
Environmental Assessment	5-8
Practical Vision	8-9
Underlying Conditions – Blocks to Moving Forward	10
Strategic Directions	10-11
Implementation	12-16
Next Steps and Alignment	17
Planning Participants	17

I. OVERARCHING STRATEGIC FOCUS

How might we, over the next five years, build on our strengths and explore new areas of growth in order to advance the mission of Nebraska Head Start Association for the future?

II. AIMS

- A. Rational Aim:** Create a clear and innovative five-year strategic plan through collaboration to set achievable goals.
- B. Experiential Aim:** Enjoy a positive and safe team environment where all participants are heard and supported.

III. PROCESS

The process was a modified version of Technology of Participation's Strategic Planning practice and incorporated additional methods from Liberating Structures and Appreciative Inquiry. The process was facilitated by Lynne Lange, a Consultant with Mission Matters. The Strategic Planning convening was held on June 7, 2023, in Lincoln, NE. The Planning Team was convened on June 22nd to create implementation plans.

What do we want to see in place in five years as a result of our collective actions?



IV. ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

- A. **Nebraska Head Start Association** works to close the gap for young children and their families by providing educational and comprehensive services within communities across the state. When families and young children have the support they need, communities benefit with healthier families, stronger schools, higher graduation rates, and a prepared workforce to compete in the future.
- B. **Mission:** The Mission of the Nebraska Head Start Association is to provide education, leadership, and advocacy that positively impacts the quality of life for Nebraska’s children, families, and communities.
- C. **Values:** Leadership, Collaboration, Teamwork, Goals, Diversity, Shared Decision Making, Education, Communication, Respect, Mentoring, Achievement, Excellence, Quality

V. AGENDA

June 7, 2023

- A. Welcome & Introductions
- B. Guiding Agreements
- C. Environmental Assessment
- D. Practical Vision
- E. Underlying Contradictions – Blocks to Moving Forward
- F. Strategic Directions
- G. Debrief and Wrap Up



VI. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Participants were divided into small groups to gain insight into factors that may be driving or influencing their organization. The following eight questions were discussed.

1. What are the strengths of the Nebraska Head Start Association?
2. What are the internal weaknesses of the Nebraska Head Start Association?
3. What is working and what is not working with the Board of Directors?
4. What is placing limits on our future, and how are old barriers being removed?
5. What bold new territories might we explore?
6. What could be changed in a positive direction in 20-30 years if we did something now?
7. Which trends and practices are mainstream in our field that might require another look from us?
8. What are newer trends in our work that are picking up momentum and acceptance?

1. What are the strengths of the Nebraska Head Start Association?

(The asterisk after listed responses indicate that participants emphasized the response.)

Like-minded around the mission*	Having an Executive Director
Committed and open President*	Experience in Head Start length and breadth
Engagement from Directors	Motivation to evolve
Strong foundation	Strong communication
Support for each other - connection	Active members and programs
Board	

2. What are the internal weaknesses of the Nebraska Head Start Association?

(The asterisk after listed responses indicate that participants emphasized the response.)

Recruitment – Lack of diverse voices, especially parents**	Need clear, cohesive direction
Limited funding and resources**	Stronger mentoring program
Geographic distance*	Membership – individuals and other organizations

3. What is working and what is not working with the Board of Directors?

What is working with the Board?	What is not working with the Board??
Good leadership structure*	Some members cannot attend due to availability – time of day, day of week*
Bi-monthly meetings	Representation across grantees (rotating)*
Agendas and meeting minutes are available	Focus on fund development*
Pretty well attended	Variety of locations to meet*
	Need diverse voices and new ideas

4. What is placing limits on our future, and how are old barriers being removed?

What is placing limits on our future?	How are old barriers being removed?
Funding – diverse revenue*	Strategic Planning
Resources- time*	Piloting access to child outcome data
Little advocacy – priorities re: policy*	Staff position
Association engagement – relationship with policy makers and advocacy organizations*	Retirees can remain as friends
Unclear and outdated strategic direction	Having an Executive Director
Connection with NHSA national to benefit state	

5. What bold new territories might we explore?

(The asterisk after listed responses indicate that participants emphasized the response.)

Be a bigger presence at and influence statewide policy**	Internal advocacy
Better partnerships – statewide, local (programs)*	External advocacy
Expanded education for staff	Marketing the mission
Data driven decisions	Providing resources for collective benefit

6. What could be changed in a positive direction in 20-30 years if we do something now?

(The asterisk after listed responses indicate that participants emphasized the response.)

Early childhood education more recognized at the state level as an <u>equal</u> – power hitter*	Free of federal level – drastically reduced – state funding, city
Empowerment of families as advocates beyond the program level*	Being an advocate at the federal level
Program benefits of membership	

7. What trends and practices are mainstream in our field that might require another look from us?

(The asterisk after listed responses indicate that participants emphasized the response.)

What are we offering people to keep them in the early childhood education field? *	Home-based vs. center-based options (community needs – funds for conversion)
How do we grow people?	Expanded partnerships
Disjointed intake process	

8. What are newer trends in our work that are picking up momentum and acceptance?

(The asterisk after listed responses indicate that participants emphasized the response.)

Cohorts of NAESP to increase quality of early childhood education*	Awareness of mental health
More of these things happening with Steph in her position*	Mobility of employment
More school districts are adding early childhood education	Anti-bias teaching practices
Building creative partnerships – “out of the box”	Pay parity

VII. PRACTICAL VISION

Participants were engaged to share their hopes and aspirations for the future of their organization. Six areas were identified as a part of their vision.

Guiding Question: What do we want to see in place in five years as a result of our collective actions?

- Purposeful Influence
- Collective Impact through Data
- Robust Organizational Infrastructure
- Clearly Defined and Available Program Benefits
- Supported Thriving Workforce
- Sustainable Diversified Funding



Practical Vision: What do we want to see in place in 5 years as a result of our collective actions?

Purposeful Influence	Collective Impact through Data	Robust Organizational Infrastructure	Clearly Defined and Available Program Benefits	Supported Thriving Workforce	Sustainable Diversified Funding
<p><i>Note: The below vision details are product of brainstorming and are neither final nor comprehensive. They were used to surface the priority categories of the Practical Vision.</i></p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for advocacy • State early childhood education policy influencer • Clearly defined advocacy agenda • Parent voice • Clearly defined message to share: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What Head Start does -What we need • Unified voice • State early childhood expert • Being at the table as equal players • Recognized contributor at early childhood education conferences • Source of expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to statewide data • Data driven decision making • Collaborate school readiness data at a statewide level • Sharing data story 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised by-laws to guide organization • Expanded website with resources and member links • Robust Advisory Committee • Increased involvement of members on committees and boards • Increased collaboration outside of the state • Elevating awareness of NeHSA and that we exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring program • Mentoring program for Directors and other management • Access to internal trainers on various topics • Known strong benefits for programs • Benefits of membership • Increased and varied membership • Clearly defined member benefits • Marketing for recruitment of staff and families • Defined expanded membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Definer” of equitable salaries and benefits • Pay parity • Nebraska – The best place to be a Head Start Educator • Partnerships with colleges benefit program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased organizational capacity • Increased association revenue • Executive Director looking for and researching grants for additional funding • Other sources of funding for NeHSA • Fully funded services

VIII. UNDERLYING CONTRADICTIONS – BLOCKS TO MOVING FORWARD

Guiding Question: What innovative, substantial actions will deal with the blocks and move us toward our vision?

Participants were engaged to think about what might potentially block them from moving toward the vision that they created. The following responses were shared:

- ✓ Fragmented state data collecting system
- ✓ Restricted time for people to be involved – conflicting schedules
- ✓ Inaccessible data
- ✓ Restricted funding
- ✓ Reluctancy of members to participate in committees etc.
- ✓ Uncoordinated messages
- ✓ Outdated bylaws
- ✓ Reluctant staff, parents, and friends to fill advisory roles
- ✓ Unmotivated or devalued workforce



IX. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Guiding Question: What innovative, substantial actions will deal with the blocks and move us toward our vision?

Participants were engaged to identify areas for strategic direction to help them set the direction for the organization and achieve the vision that they created. Five actions were identified:



#1

#2

#3

#4

#5

Establishing and communicating program benefits	Assessing and expanding financial resources	Creating and aligning data plan with association programs	Defining messaging and advocacy priorities	Launching a workforce taskforce
Create communication tool for member benefits	Research grant opportunities	Create a data plan (access, usage, identify, gaps)	Develop resources for all programs to utilize as they educate and advocate	Launch a workforce taskforce
Produce priority list for member benefits	Create fund development plan	Partner or create a data collection process	NeHSA memberships on the state and local early childhood education committees and advocacy groups	
Explore possibilities for program benefits	Assessment of resources			
Survey programs on what benefits they fee NeHSA needs to offer	Create financial marketing plan			
Create a list of member benefits to attract new members				
Mentoring programs for all positions				

X. IMPLEMENTATION

On June 22, 2023, the Nebraska Head Start Association strategic planning committee was engaged to create implementation plans.

Guiding Question: What will be our specific, measurable accomplishments for the first year?

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1: Nebraska Head Start Association will establish and communicate program benefits that are clearly defined.	
Timeframe: October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024	
We will know success when we see it using these measurable standards:	
GOAL #1: Analyze and determine current benefits and potential future benefits for members. GOAL #2: Develop an attractive, informative communication tool about the Association member benefits. GOAL #3: Disseminate membership benefit information to members.	
A realistic plan to achieve these goals includes these tactics/activities:	Complete by Date:
✓ Create a list of current clearly defined benefits that are received by members.	
✓ Survey members about current benefits and desired benefits.	
✓ Explore, define, and establish updated benefits.	
✓ Gain Board approval of benefits.	
✓ Determine various levels of benefits. (individual, business)	
✓ Include member benefits on the website, brochure, etc.	
Thinking about Equity and Inclusion: Can you imagine there being any unintentional disparate impact along lines of power and identity? How might inequity or exclusion show up? For whom? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we get feedback from ALL members to ensure we are creating meaningful benefits for all? Truly try to engage everyone to be involved. • YEAR #2: Get input from tribal programs and others who may not be current members. Hold focus groups to gain meaningful information from others we may serve. 	
How might you change the goal to either mitigate that disparate impact or make <i>Equity and Inclusion</i> more explicit? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve all voices in the creation of the benefits. Invite members to help create. 	
Existing board committee or new committee to own this action: Membership Committee BOARD/STAFF CHAMPION to lead goal: Christie Ference	
Those involved with this goal creation: Angie Antholz, Megan Kvols, Niki Gemar, Marissa Vinsky, Erika Fink, Paula Thompson	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2:	
Nebraska Head Start Association will develop strategies for increasing sustainable funding to reach organizational goals.	
Timeframe: October 1, 2023- September 30, 2024	
We will know success when we see it using these measurable standards:	
GOAL #1: Align finances with future direction and goals. GOAL #2: Create a fund development plan that embraces our mission. GOAL #3: Develop a system to recruit different levels of membership.	
A realistic plan to achieve these goals includes these tactics/activities:	Complete by Date:
✓ Educate all board/staff about current financial position.	
✓ Gather information about how other state and regional associations generate funds.	
✓ Research grant opportunities.	
✓ Look at avenues to generate income through trainings.	
✓ Establish fees for each tier of membership.	
✓	
Thinking about Equity and Inclusion: Can you imagine there being any unintentional disparate impact along lines of power and identity? How might inequity or exclusion show up? For whom?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be cognizant of tribal entities and other organizations serving underserved populations who may be paying dues to multiple organizations. Be mindful of various budget sizes for different programs and factor that in. 	
How might you change the goal to either mitigate that disparate impact or make <i>Equity and Inclusion</i> more explicit?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create structure that embraces equity for membership. 	
Existing board committee or new committee to own this action: ED, Advocacy, PD, and Membership Committees	
BOARD/STAFF CHAMPION to lead goal: ED	
Those involved with this goal creation: Angie Antholz, Megan Kvols, Niki Gemar, Marissa Vinsky, Erika Fink, Paula Thompson	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3:	
Nebraska Head Start Association will assess data needs and potential collaborations.	
Timeframe: October 1, 2023- September 30, 2024	
We will know success when we see it using these measurable standards:	
GOAL #1: Build partnerships with other early childhood entities for accessing current data and generating the data to meet the gaps. - ECIDS, Buffett	
GOAL #2: Partner with Nebraska Head Start Collaboration Office on data sharing.	
GOAL #3: Develop data access and utilization plan.	
A realistic plan to achieve these goals includes these tactics/activities:	Complete by Date:
✓ Presentation on ECIDS pilot to advisory committee/regular updates from participating programs	
✓ Utilize collaboration office data for association annual report.	
✓ Identify what data we need – data inventory survey.	
✓ Assess Buffett, Collaboration Office, NeHSA PDG data	
✓	
✓	
Thinking about Equity and Inclusion: Can you imagine there being any unintentional disparate impact along lines of power and identity? How might inequity or exclusion show up? For whom?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency policies and procedures around confidentiality and/or comfort level with sharing data. 	
How might you change the goal to either mitigate that disparate impact or make <i>Equity and Inclusion</i> more explicit?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
Existing board committee or new committee to own this action: Membership	
BOARD/STAFF CHAMPION to lead goal: Niki Gemar	
Those involved with this goal creation: Membership Committee	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #4:	
Nebraska Head Start Association will be visible and considered as experts in the early childhood field.	
Timeframe: October 1, 2023- September 30, 2024	
We will know success when we see it using these measurable standards:	
GOAL #1: Create consistent representation of the Nebraska Head Start Association across the state on key early childhood committees, events, and initiatives.	
GOAL #2: Share a clear and consistent message about Head Start/Early Head Start’s role in quality comprehensive services in early childhood.	
GOAL #3:	
A realistic plan to achieve these goals includes these tactics/activities:	Complete by Date:
✓ Create an organizational chart/diagram showcasing our members and who is at the tables.	
✓ Create a system of what messages we want to promote and how to promote them.	
✓ Utilize ECLKC for social media messaging.	
✓ Utilize NHSA messaging.	
✓ Determine how to disseminate information received/obtained.	
✓	
Thinking about Equity and Inclusion: Can you imagine there being any unintentional disparate impact along lines of power and identity? How might inequity or exclusion show up? For whom?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure we have representation across programs and roles. 	
How might you change the goal to either mitigate that disparate impact or make <i>Equity and Inclusion</i> more explicit?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Existing board committee or new committee to own this action: Advocacy and PD Committees	
BOARD/STAFF CHAMPION to lead goal: Paula Thompson	
Those involved with this goal creation: Advocacy and PD Committees.	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #5:	
Nebraska Head Start Association will investigate launching a committee to support a thriving workforce within the field of early childhood education.	
Timeframe: October 1, 2023- September 30, 2024	
We will know success when we see it using these measurable standards:	
GOAL #1: Present the idea of creating a workforce committee. GOAL #2: GOAL #3:	
A realistic plan to achieve this goal includes these tactics/activities:	Complete by Date:
✓ Have a presentation at an advisory committee meeting to gauge interest.	
✓ Present the idea for board approval if the majority is interested.	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
Thinking about Equity and Inclusion: Can you imagine there being any unintentional disparate impact along lines of power and identity? How might inequity or exclusion show up? For whom?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure no overlap of existing committees. 	
How might you change the goal to either mitigate that disparate impact or make <i>Equity and Inclusion</i> more explicit?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
Existing board committee or new committee to own this action: Advisory Committee and Board	
BOARD/STAFF CHAMPION to lead goal: Krystie Hohnstein	
Those involved with this goal creation: Jill Bomberger, Niki Gemar, Angie Antholz	

XI. NEXT STEPS AND ALIGNMENT

A. Next steps include:

- 12-month implementation plan finalized
- Board formal adoption of the Strategic Plan
- Share with all internal team members
- Begin sharing with external stakeholders

B. Alignment ensures that the organization’s programs and operations are consistent with the new Strategic Plan.

Areas to consider are:

- Board meeting agendas – Are we spending our time on the most important issues?
- Committee structure – What changes do we need to make to align with the Strategic Directions?
- Budget – What additional resources are needed to successfully carry out the plan?
- ED Annual Review – Are areas of focus aligned with the Strategic Plan?
- Annual Board of Director’s Assessment – Is the Board centering the Strategic Plan in their work and evaluating themselves?

XII. PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

<p>Jill Bomberger Mustafaa El-Scari Kristen Fagan Christie Ference Niki Gemar Lisa Giboney Krystie Hohnstein Stephanie Knust Megan Kvols Audra Oestreich Tiffany Shonerd Clarence Small Paula Thompson Marissa Vinsky</p>	<p>Involved with creating implementation plan:</p> <p>Angie Antholz Erika Fink Niki Gemar Megan Kvols Paula Thompson Marissa Vinsky</p>
--	--



mission-matters.com | P.O. Box 540892 | Omaha, NE 68154