

LICKING COUNTY

— Board of —

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

January 2024 - December 2026 Strategic Plan

OUR MISSION

We support people with developmental disabilities to discover, pursue and achieve what is important to them.

OUR VISION

People with developmental disabilities get the support they need to fulfill their responsibilities and have a good life that includes family, friends, home and work.

CORE VALUES

Honesty & Trust

We strive for truthfulness and sincerity in our relationships with the people we support and their families, our community, our partners and each other.

Caring & Compassion

We are supportive of and attentive to people's needs.

Respect

We demonstrate regard and appreciation for others.

Safety & Health

We strive to keep people safe and healthy.

Ethical Behavior

We strive to meet the highest standards of professional and personal behavior.

Adaptability

We adjust to changing needs and circumstances.

Responsibility to the Community

We are good citizens and careful with our resources.

The Future

We focus on planning for the people we support and our organization.

Excellence

We strive for quality in everything we do.

Creativity

We strive to be innovative and resourceful.

OUR KEY PRINCIPLES

Quality of Life: Is defined by each person, with an emphasis on the balance between what is important *to* the person, and what is important *for* the person.

Language: Demonstrates respect for the person, his or her family, and friends. It is easily understood by everyone in conversation and recordkeeping.

Culture of Strengths and Abilities: The strengths of each person and family are promoted. A focus on what is positive and productive is used throughout a person's engagement with the Board.

Collaborative: Contributions are equally valued and responsibility is shared. Creativity and innovation in the management, design and delivery of services is encouraged and expected.

Results based: Results are purposeful and meaningful to the person's life. They are achieved by building on what works and learning from what doesn't work, to continuously seek improved results.

Practical: A balance is sought between quality of life and the boundaries of public resources, with an understanding that limited fiscal resources must be responsibly administered to support, but not replace, relationships with family and friends. Everyone works to promote natural connections in neighborhoods and communities, and addresses only those areas where the person supported wants involvement from the system.

PREFACE

The focus of this plan is the strategic removal of barriers that impact the quality of life of persons with developmental disabilities. The long-range commitments and short-term goals are in specific response to ongoing input received from persons we support, their families, staff, providers and partners and other key stakeholders, as well as current events. Specifically, we have targeted strategies and actions that can be reasonably addressed with the Board's financial and human resources and which are supported by the Board's operating budget. The long term commitments contained in this plan consider architectural, attitudinal, environmental, financial, employment, communication, transportation, technology, community integration and other factors. Included in this strategic plan, which is largely broadly focused on accessibility for people with developmental disabilities, are only those goals and activities that are the highest priority for the people we support and the organization.

THE BOARD'S FUNDING PRIORITIES

As long as resources are available, the following are the Board's priorities for funding consistent with the requirements of Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 5123:2-1-02 (county board administration) and 5123:2-1-08 (the waiting list rule):

1. Medicaid match is leveraged to secure federal funds that pay approximately 60% on home and community-based waiver services (HCBS). The waivers pay the cost of services such as: homemaker personal care, transportation, day services, employment supports, home modifications, and equipment. Currently three types of waivers are available to individuals based on the results of a DODD Waiting List Assessment (WLA): Individual Options (I/O), Level One, and Self. For 2024 the Board has budgeted for 20 I/O waivers and 15 Level One waivers to be available for individuals who have an immediate need as identified by the WLA. Over the past 5 years the average waiver cost for all waivers combined has increased by 21%. The Board will not request waiver slots for which no match source is identified and committed.

To mitigate its financial liability under any proposed unfunded or new and not financially forecasted/budgeted waivers, the Board will pass a resolution specific to its enrollment limit on this waiver type.

While the need for new waivers and increased supports/funding of existing waivers continues to increase, the Board continually monitors its ability to take on such financial liability. Annually, LCBDD completes and files with DODD the County Boards Cash Projection Model. This provides the Board with an opportunity to evaluate its financial picture over the coming 5 to 10 years. The tool is completed as part of the annual budgeting process and is reviewed at minimum quarterly. All county boards are required to file this report with DODD on April 1 of each year.

2. Early Childhood services, including Early Intervention, that are interest and strength based, use evidence-based parent coaching practices, and are delivered through a primary service provider in natural environments by a core team of specialists and therapists.
3. Family Support Services as described in Board policy. The Board makes an annual budgetary allocation for this program.
4. Activities and partnerships that promote the successful transition of teenagers from school to adult life and promote employment after high school graduation/completion.
5. Supported living, transportation, and day service costs for adults not eligible for a Medicaid waiver. Persons competitively employed may be required to contribute to the cost of their transportation.

THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

Challenges:

- Population growth is on the rise, especially in the western half of the county. Various school districts are having a hard time keeping up with this growth, specifically with the capacity of their current buildings and getting levies passed to fund appropriate brick and mortar projects to alleviate the issues with overcrowding. House sales continue to occur and job growth continues at a rapid pace as Intel, Amazon, Google, Meta, Kohl's, and many other large companies settle in Licking County.
- Census bureau data reflects county population growth of 19.3% since calendar year 2000, mostly in western Licking County. New residents in this area of the county largely come from Franklin County. They move to escape higher property taxes, increase their purchasing power, and enroll their children in smaller/rural schools. They remain oriented to Franklin County and the Columbus metropolitan area for work, shopping, and socialization. It is estimated that around 60% of the county population works in Franklin County. We have seen a 10 percent increase in the number of people we support annually from 2019 to 2022.
- Economic development is a priority for both the city and the county, and some of the results of these efforts can be seen in New Albany, Johnstown, Jersey Township, and Etna Township, which has helped to improve the employment outlook in Licking County. The expansion into Licking County from companies such as Intel, Microsoft, Google, Amazon and Kohl's recently has provided or will provide jobs for many people. Nearly all of the economic growth in recent years is on the western side of the county.
- LCBDD has two continuing levies: one is a 1.5 mill levy that was last updated in 2016 and the other is a 1.6 mill levy that was last updated in 2014. With the property value appreciation over the past several years, these two levies each have an approximate effective millage of .8 mills. It is expected that in 2025-2026, LCBDD will need to seek additional financial support from the residents of Licking County.

This would be through either a replacement levy or additional millage on one or both levies, due to the county's growing population and change in needs of individuals supported by the Board and the Board infrastructure to support such growth. Currently new property construction generates approximately \$350,000 - \$400,000 annually on the Board's existing levies.

- Over the past five years, we have experienced an increase in the number of children in crisis who need short-term stabilization in a residential-type setting with professionals and other personnel who are trained to address the specific needs of each child. The Board is a part of the Children and Families First Council (CFFC), and since this issue impacts a variety of children with different needs, it is best for us to collaboratively tackle this issue together with multiple professional fields. In recent years, we have seen out-of-county placements fail upon the child's return due to the lack of transition training back in the home that is needed. We all agree that we need homes in Licking County. To help with the increase in need and to keep youth in their home county, LCBDD opened the Tollgate home and piloted in-home respite services. While these services have helped, the financial impact is significant, which requires us to work closely with partner agencies who can help provide wraparound services without overlapping efforts and ensuring supports remain consistent to meet the child's needs.
- Our workforce has been impacted since the COVID-19 pandemic. We are experiencing on average a 15% turnover rate; however, we do continue to get applicants for open positions. Our onboarding process is lengthy, but we pride ourselves on hiring the best applicants who believe in our mission. We continually monitor staffing needs using a position control/review method. Our overall administrative overhead costs remain at 8%.
- Different generations of families from various cultures have different expectations of the Board and priorities. Traditional day service programs have shifted to different options that are community-based. Employment is on the rise. We are especially grateful to Licking Memorial Health Systems for hosting and supporting Project Search. Families with young children expect more resources to be put at their disposal, including money to match Medicaid waivers. We take all requests into consideration based on a person-centered approach and need, to educate families on what services are needed now and what potentially may be needed in the future.
- Licking County Transit is a certified DD provider and provides the majority of non-medical transportation to eligible persons. They also transport eligible people who do not need a waiver, in which LCBDD funds these trips. Licking County Transit has merged with the Central Ohio Transit Authority out of Franklin County. This change improved the operations of the transit services in Licking County and in 2023, fixed routes were added. We are very optimistic about the changes and experiences riders will have as the transit services continue to grow.
- The Board has a provider relations department whose staff of four have been actively engaged with providers to ensure they have the information needed, and we have offered to provide technical assistance as they work to evolve to meet the demands/desires of those we support. Additionally, the staff of four all work in areas of their expertise which include a focus on: independent providers, agency providers, and direct support recruitment, retention, and training. Building these relationships is key to maintaining a strong reciprocal relationship with all our DD system partners.
- School districts have few resources and little expertise in effectively preparing school-aged students with developmental disabilities for post-graduation employment. The Board has a department of professionals who work with all school districts in the county. The transition specialists begin working with students at age 13 and continue until graduation. Our specialists assist the students, families, school faculty, and community resources with transition plans based on each person's interest. These services have been so well received that the success rate exceeds the state's overall average. In addition, we have completed multiple successful Project Search programs with Licking Memorial

Hospital since 2016 and continue to do so today. Project Search has yielded several permanent jobs for people with disabilities since its start.

- Long range planning to manage and meet Medicaid match obligations. We continue to complete a ten-year forecast which is extremely helpful in looking at our long-term commitments and growth, which we base on current trends and information that we know.

Opportunities:

- The Board is currently financially stable. Continuation of our fiscal sustainability will rely on monitoring and strategic planning as to how we will address the future growth in support needs, while at the same time managing other factors that impact the amount of funds that we collect through the two approved levies. The opportunity to serve more people with the same amount of money will be a challenge; however, we do believe that through careful planning, accountability, focusing on outcomes, and through education with providers, families, and individuals, we will continue to be good stewards of tax dollars.
- Increase utilization of technology as a way to support people, employment, self-waivers and shared living services.
- Continue to offer Project Search programs for transitioning high school students.
- Continue to offer evidence-based early childhood services in natural environments with a primary service provider supported by a core team of specialists.
- Continue to partner in the local one-stop employment center named Licking County Ohio Means Jobs, designed to influence business and industry on behalf of people with developmental disabilities.
- Continue to maximize administrative and operational efficiencies available through our membership in the Mideast Ohio Regional Council of Government (MEORC COG), as well as news services that are available to providers.
- Explore new technology that could help improve efficiency and better time management for staff.
- Continue to use technology to enhance connectedness with people we support and their families through e-mail (Constant Contact), enhancements to the website, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest. In addition, we will continue to improve communication with families through meetings, videos and virtual opportunities and pursue opportunities to translate information for those who speak English as a second language.
- Contracted services are the largest percentage of the Board's annual operating expenses. This reflects significant investment in specialized and community services for people with developmental disabilities and reflects ongoing efforts to build community capacity.
- The Board currently contracts with four different agencies for the purpose of advancing self-advocacy efforts. Three of the contracts provide funding to the three local Kiwanis Clubs for the support of the Aktion Club, which has fourteen active members. Kiwanis members attend Aktion Club meetings and include members in Kiwanis' regular volunteer activities. The Board also contracts with Mental Health America for youth self-advocacy services, which currently has a presence in five school districts and the YMCA All-For-One Camp.

- Strong provider engagement has proved to be critically important during emergency situations. The monthly Excellence Network (TEN) meetings average representation from six of the twenty-six active provider agencies in Licking County with an average of ten provider agency staff members in attendance. Based on provider feedback, attendance can be attributed to the valuable system information provided during those meetings.
- We are working with providers to assist them with building capacity by focusing efforts on the workforce crisis. These planned efforts started in 2017 with the bulk of Board-supported programs beginning in 2018 with the DSP Employment Connections Program. The focus of the program is to aid in the reduction in staff turnover, improve employee retention, and decrease onboarding costs. We recognize the importance of working with providers to help recruit and retain staff, and feel that it is equally our responsibility to assist them in their efforts to reduce their direct support employee vacancy rate.
- We meet with all newly certified independent providers within 60 days after they have been selected to provide services. We do this to review their responsibilities to the individual's goals that are in the individual service plan. We also have a person in our provider relations department who is assigned specifically to be a resource to independent providers at any time they need our assistance.

LONG TERM COMMITMENTS AND SHORTER TERM GOALS JANUARY 2024 - DECEMBER 2026

The Board's five primary areas of focus for the next three years are noted on the following pages: Preparation for Growth; Enhancement of Services to Meet New and Existing Needs; Utilization of Technology; Training and Education; and Human Resources. Each area of focus explains why it is a priority and lists specific goals to achieve desired outcomes. Each goal includes anticipated completion dates and notes the project lead. Finally, metrics have been identified to define how progress will be measured.

#1 - Preparation for Growth

Why		
Establish a proactive response regarding the expected population growth in the county which will increase the number of people that LCBDD serves by strengthening and developing partnerships, assisting providers with capacity, and through effective communication, both internal and external.		
How	Complete by Date	Lead
Assess LCBDD's financial sustainability and projected growth calculations.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Director of Finance
Assess current partnerships and identifying future partnerships we want to target.	12/31/24	Director of Early Childhood
Track and increase community event participation.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Director of Early Childhood
Increase capacity for community outreach, both internally and externally.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Public Information Officer
Assess all roles within the organization by updating position descriptions to reflect skills needed to adapt to changing needs of people supported. Review caseload size suggestions, etc.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Director of Human Resources
Review demographic trends and growth numbers in Licking County to determine if / what changes are needed to Table of Organization. Examples include translator services, staff attorney, SC's working specifically with Nepali families, etc.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Director of Human Resources
Evaluate current provider capacity compared to growth projections.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Chief Operations Officer
DSP recruitment measures.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Chief Operations Officer
Metrics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current partnerships and identifying future partnerships we want to target. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather team to identify current partnerships of both school and community partners. • Team meets annually; more if needed. • Team identifies future partnerships including additional school buildings and/or school districts as well as community agencies we want to target. • Create a spreadsheet of both current and future partners and assign who is reaching out to new schools and agencies. • Track and increase community event participation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a shared document in order to keep track of the name of the event being attended. • Date of the event. • Who is hosting the event? • Who is the target audience? • Staff working/volunteering at the event? • LCBDD cost and giveaways for the event? 		

- Community attendance of the event?
- Outlying factors of the event such as weather, indoor or outdoor, within proximity of a holiday or other event, weekday, weeknight or weekend, time of day.
- Increase capacity for community outreach, both internally and externally.
 - Create position description and goals for Outreach Coordinator position.
 - Use Comms Committee to collect data from different departments about barriers to participating in events that could be addressed.
 - Use data from partnership planning meetings and event tracking, determine staff participation and role of Outreach Coordinator.
- Financial Stability
 - Financial stability will be collected from the cash projection tool used in conjunction with the cost report and measured against growth indicators in the county such as housing permits, public school enrollment, and other percentages calculated by local entities.

#2 – Enhancement of Services to Meet New and Existing Needs

Why		
Ensure that all services are focused on the person’s needs in a manner that will yield the best benefit and outcomes for the people we support. Services must be sensitive to our diverse population and be respectful to cultural differences. The overall outcome is for everyone that LCBDD serves to realize the real benefits of the services and supports which improves lives.		
How	Complete by Date	Lead
Evaluate the effectiveness of the services and outcomes at the Tollgate home.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Chief Administrative Officer
Assess current and projected needs at the Tollgate home.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Chief Administrative Officer
Assess current and projected needs for in-home and out-of-home respite.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Chief Administrative Officer
Assess the capacity and develop a proactive approach to behavior supports.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Chief Administrative Officer
Evaluate current intake process and identify any improvement areas needed in order to increase capacity and streamline across departments.	12/31/24	Chief Administrative Officer
Evaluate current mentor position and identify any improvement areas needed in order to increase capacity and streamline across departments.	12/31/25	Chief Administrative Officer
Evaluate current behavior support process and identify any improvement areas needed in order to increase capacity and streamline across departments.	12/31/26	Chief Administrative Officer
Metrics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually review the percentage of successful discharges from Tollgate. Successful defined as no readmission to Tollgate or a Developmental Center up to 6 months after discharge. • Develop and review waiting lists for Tollgate and in-home respite in order to determine need for future program growth and development of out-of-home respite. • Recruit and hire a BCBA by 2/1/2024. • Develop criteria of children BCBA will serve and implement criteria by 5/1/2024. • Review number of children BCBA was able to serve and determine if a waiting list for services is needed. • Partner with MEORC to identify any areas of improvement to gain additional capacity around intake, mentor, and behavior support processes. 		

#3 - Utilization of Technology

Why		
Increase the utilization of technology for Board operations that will improve efficiency by reducing the time it takes to do administrative tasks. Increase the exploration and utilization of technology that can assist people with developmental disabilities and improve independence.		
How	Complete by Date	Lead
Procure a more modern and robust finance software solution.	12/31/25	Director of IT
Look at current IT equipment setup and evaluate changes that could be made to better equip employees for their roles.	12/31/26	Director of IT
Complete digitization of historical records of people we support.	12/31/25	Executive Administrative Manager
Develop and implement a plan for training of technology to individuals, families, guardians, and providers.	12/31/2024, 12/31/2025, 12/31/2026	Chief Administrative Officer
Offer locally funded technology assessments for all 18-year-olds served by LCBDD in 2024, 2025, and 2026 in order to expand their use of technology.	12/31/2024, 12/31/2025, 12/31/2026	Chief Administrative Officer
Metrics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2025 a new financial software will be selected and implemented. • In 2024, 2025 and 2026 the equipment setups for LCBDD staff will be evaluated semi-annually and any recommended changes will be brought to leadership team for discussion. • By the end of 2025, 100% of active historical records of people currently supported by the Board will be scanned into the document management system. • By the end of 2024, 25% of the people who have recently turned 18 will participate in a technology assessment, increasing to 37.5% participation in 2025, and 50% participation in 2026. • Complete setup of technology set up with CDS and Bloom as partners by 1/31/2024. • Develop process to track number of people we serve, family members, and providers who explore the technology setup on a quarterly basis. 		

#4 - Training and Education

Why		
Ensure that employees receive training and education so that they can excel at their job responsibilities which will enable them to maintain positive relationships with individuals we serve and families.		
How	Complete by Date	Lead
Implement "Employee Transition to Management" curriculum.	12/31/24	Director of IT
Develop Training Suggestion Plan.	12/31/24	Director of IT
Develop Training Materials Map.	12/31/26	Director of IT
Metrics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2024 the "Employee Transition to Management" curriculum will be in place for staff. • By the end of 2024 a training suggestion plan will be implemented for staff input on training needs. • By the end of 2024 a map for training materials will be created. This data will be updated as needed throughout the strategic planning period. 		

#5 - Human Resources

Why		
Ensure evaluations are based on outcomes that measure employee performance by identifying strengths and weaknesses so that supervisors can provide any additional support that is needed. Encourage workforce diversity through practices which communicates that LCBDD is a safe workplace that is respectful to everyone as an individual. Evaluate the current employee assistance program services to ensure that they are meeting employee needs and providing effective benefits.		
How	Complete by Date	Lead
Create a modernized performance review with a focus on manager / employee conversations regarding goals, feedback, career development and employee experience.	12/31/24	Director of Human Resources
Communicate resources and how to access them. Work with county to assure current needs of staff members are met through current EAP arrangement.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Director of Human Resources
Review policies, procedures and work norms to offer continued flexibility, work / life balance and ensure boundaries are established.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Director of Human Resources
Create a DEI Plan.	12/31/25	Public Information Officer
Review current policies from DEI perspective.	12/31/26	Public Information Officer
Explore ways that people we support can be involved in DEI efforts.	12/31/24, 12/31/25, 12/31/26	Public Information Officer
Metrics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize members of DEI Steering committee to create DEI plan and organize policy review. Utilize DEI meetings as a space to explore ways people we support can be involved in DEI efforts. Keep staff turnover rate between 10%-15%. 		