

STRATEGIC PLAN



ARK REGIONAL SERVICES

**Developed March 2016
Last Reviewed March 2019**

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Ark Regional Services has developed this Strategic Plan in order to evaluate current strengths and weaknesses in order to make recommendations and develop action plans for future planning and direction.

OUR VISION AND MISSION

The vision of Ark Regional Services is that all people have the opportunity to experience the world in which we all live.

In order to support this vision, Ark Regional Services will facilitate opportunities for people:

- to **LIVE** enriched, full and individualized lives;
- to **LEARN** what is necessary and meaningful to realize personal success;
- to **WORK** toward individual accomplishment, employment satisfaction and community contribution;
- and to **PLAY**

OUR HISTORY

The organization we know today as Ark Regional Services was first established in April of 1963 by a small group of parents of children with developmental disabilities. These parents fervently believed that children with developmental disabilities should receive special services, education and training in their own community rather than in a state institution far from family and friends. In the beginning, there was no state, federal, county or city financial support for the program, so the parents financed the operation themselves with assistance from the Laramie Civitan Club. Our program was originally housed in the garage of Carl and Marion Eberhart. In 1968, a group of Laramie citizens donated the "Red House", and through a long term lease, the City of Laramie provided the lot next to LaBonte Park for a more permanent location.

Eventually, the parents' vision of community services for people with developmental disabilities began to be shared by others, and federal legislation was enacted to provide financial support for the Laramie program and others nationwide. State, county, city and private support soon followed and the program began to steadily grow.

During the early 1970's, the "movement" to prevent institutionalization and to move people with developmental disabilities out of institutions had captured the hearts of federal and state government agencies and countless thousands of private citizens nationwide. The Wyoming legislature created the Office of Mental health and Mental Retardation in order to financially support and technically supervise the Ark programs and others like it statewide.

Today the Wyoming Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division – DD Section, serves as our funding and regulatory agency. State funding provides for comprehensive residential, vocational, day habilitation, case management, therapeutic and nursing services to over 100 people throughout Albany and Carbon Counties.

Ark Regional Services is nationally accredited by CARF, the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission, which is the accrediting body for rehabilitation facilities nationwide. CARF accreditation provides assurance to all concerned individuals, organizations and agencies that Ark Regional Services maintains the highest standards for all of its programs and services provided to our clients.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Our State

Wyoming ranks ninth in size among the states of the Union, covering 97,814 square miles, and is considered to be rural in nature. Since its early settlement in the mid-19th century, Wyoming has had an economy based on its natural resources. Cattle ranching and coal mining became major economic activities in the late 19th century. Farming grew in importance in the early 20th century, and the fossil fuel industry was diversified as new deposits of petroleum and natural gas were discovered. Today, mining is the most important sector of the state economy, followed by the government and financial services sector. Of growing importance to many communities, and the state as a whole, is the tourism industry. The manufacturing sector, however, remains relatively undeveloped.

In the 2013 national census, Wyoming ranked 50th in the nation, with a total population of 582,658. Population density was 5.8 persons per square mile. In 2013 only six counties had a sizable population, with Laramie rating 6th most populated overall with 31,681 residents. Generally, Wyoming remains a land of wide open spaces checkered by about 100 municipalities, mostly small towns with a few medium-sized cities.

Our Organization

Ark Regional Services has been providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities since 1963. We employ a staff of approximately 265, 53% of which are part time. Evenings and weekends provide convenient working hours for college students. With the University of Wyoming, Wyoming Technical Institute and Laramie County Community College in our city, many of our staff are college students or otherwise tied to the college community. Due to the transient nature of our community, turnover rates for part time staff are fairly consistent at approximately 73%, with total turnover averaging 60%. However, senior level management staff members have an average 17 year tenure.

Our People

Ark Regional Services provides supports to approximately 125 clients in Albany County. We serve people with a wide array of disabilities who function at a wide range of functioning levels. People receive funding through the State of Wyoming Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver, School Districts, the Department of Family Services, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Although a person or their family will occasionally choose to pay for services with personal funds, the fee for services typically makes this choice cost prohibitive.

OUR SERVICES

Ark Regional Services offers a comprehensive array of services including residential, supported living, community integration, community employment, adult day services, and occupational therapy.

Ark Regional Services embraces its role as a community services provider. Leadership and staff assist and support the people receiving services in accessing their community. Because of this approach toward providing services, every effort is made to find community options to address people's wants and needs. We also offer dynamic classes in arts, literacy, communication, and equine care that utilize a combination of community and Ark resources.

Ark discontinued skilled nursing services in January, 2014. This modification was made primarily because of the change to the BHD's definition of Skilled Nursing Services, which significantly limited the services for which nurses could bill. Although it became a financial burden to have nurses on staff, Ark continues to assist and support people in accessing community resources to meet their acute and routine healthcare needs, an approach which is more aligned with the role of a community service provider.

Case Management services were discontinued March 31, 2015. The State of Wyoming moved to a conflict free case management system, so Ark is no longer able to provide case management to clients receiving other services. Organizational changes to the staff structure have been made to incorporate staff members (Client Services Managers) who operate as an internal case manager, although case management services will not be billed.

Ark also provides administrative and financial support to the Wyoming Down Syndrome Association and the Wyoming Buddy Walk.

OUR LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Historically, service providers in Wyoming have had a constructive relationship with legislatures and executive branch leadership. Wyoming is not largely populated, and as such we have better access to both state and federal government officials than other states. This access offers providers the opportunity to meet directly with legislators and give them input and recommendations on our issues and concerns.

Although we are a fiscally conservative state, legislators have typically been financially supportive of the DD system, and have funded many requests including several cost of living adjustments, system wide increases, the money needed to implement a new rate system, and a 6% reinstatement of a statewide 10% budget cut.

Over the last several legislative sessions, we have been dealt a total of 8% in overall funding cuts, and have not seen any increases for cost of living. The Legislature also required the Department of Health to requisition a Medicaid Options Study. This study included the identification and analysis of cost drivers within Medicaid programs, the evaluation of options to reduce costs, and recommendations for potential Medicaid program redesigns and costs savings. The results of the study prompted the Behavioral Health Division (BHD) to redesign the waiver programs, developing a capped Support Waiver and a comprehensive waiver.

This redesign was legislated in part because the waiver system was financially unsustainable. Additionally, at the time of the legislation, there were over 500 people on the waiting list for services. It was felt by the legislative body that, with a redesign of the current system, money would be available to fund services for people on the waiting list.

The biggest challenge faced with the waiver redesign is that the services that are now being provided, while more individualized and typical, are also more expensive. This, combined with the funding cuts that occurred through the implementation, has made this a much more expensive and staff intensive system.

During the 2015 legislative session, the full legislature provided \$3 million in total funding, which was considered by lawmakers to be a down payment on any new funding that is recommended through the rebasing process, which is legislated every 2 – 4 years.

Over the past several years, and especially since the waiver redesign, providers have had more difficulty making ends meet. Ark Regional Services routinely relies on the Ark Memorial

Foundation to supplement our funding in order to meet the expenses, most of which are personnel costs. It is anticipated that several of the larger community providers will go out of business due to financial difficulties within the next 2 – 4 years (2018 – 2020).

A rebasing cost study did occur in the Spring of 2015. The results of that study were presented to the Joint Labor, Health, and Social Services committee in December 2015. That committee, led by Senator Scott and Representative Harvey were displeased with the outcome of the study, and felt the study was completed in an incompetent manner. The committee as a whole, and Senator Scott in particular, worked diligently over the 2016 Budget session to secure the \$3M one time funding as ongoing funding. Additionally, \$1.8M was as ongoing funding to supplement the \$3M. This was due in large part to providers educating legislators on the absolute reality of organizations going out of business.

An additional outcome of the 2016 session is funding for an additional rebasing effort, which will begin in July, 2016. This rebasing study will be a more comprehensive study, include a requirement for all providers to participate, and will have legislative oversight throughout the process.

SOAR ANALYSIS - Updated 2019

In an effort to build on Ark strengths, rather than focus on weaknesses, many over which we have no control, we incorporated a new assessment to identify the results we want to see

A detailed analysis of Ark's strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results has been completed. Long term organizational goals are developed to address issues noted.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ark’s reputation • Recognition that relationship with stakeholders are important (guardians/families/state/community) • Progressive – Risk takers – foresight • Implement changes based on need, not requirement – staying ahead of the game • Non-traditional “day hab” – curriculum based education and arts program with a wide variety of options • Longevity at all levels of the organization • Advocacy – within the community and legislatively, for Ark and system as a whole • Training – acknowledge importance, meaningful, keep it relevant, values based • Safety focused – take it seriously • Financial preparedness – helps us to weather the hard times • Use of technology – make it work and identifying how to improve • Embrace partnerships – understand that we can’t be everything to everyone • Live our values – not just a piece of paper • UW provides workforce resources and client employment opportunities • Geography – Not as rural as the rest of WY • Clients who want to work can work • Leadership has a strong understanding and commitment to the need for public funding • Clients personal choice is respected and valued 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership – making sure people know what they need to know, sharing knowledge, imparting knowledge to the next group of emerging leaders • Quality Assurance –We will adhere to State and Federal rules and CARF standards but will maintain our fidelity to our organizational approach that is unique and highly beneficial to our clients • Community – outreach, donors, opportunity of inclusivity • Balancing rights and responsibilities to help people be accepted and respected as equal citizens • New clients with varying IBA’s • Adjust organizational structure so staff have more direct supervision • Expanding Equestrian Services • Expanding Educational Services • Technology – increase options for clients • Specialized services and environments to meet the needs of clients – (Autism, elderly, medically fragile, etc.) • Fundraising/Events/Outreach • State partnership team, DD Advisory Council, WCSP • Empower employees to invest in our approach and offer ideas
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ASPIRATIONS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Vision • People are accepted and respected as equal citizens • Accredited education program • Relevance – provide services that stakeholders want and need • A workforce that has the skills to do the job and understand why we do what we do • Financial Stability • We are the model of Community Services for the state and nationally • People will participate in the opportunities available to them • Longevity of staff, lower turnover 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>RESULTS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most progressive, innovative, and effective facilitator of supports in Wyoming • Making decisions based on what is right not what is easy • Never forgetting why we do what we do

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESS

Ark has identified the following ongoing focus areas and strategic goals, which have been broken down into specific measurable objectives. Staff have been assigned to each objective, and will be responsible for reporting progress to the President/CEO at management meetings. Progress on each objective will be recorded at least quarterly.

Focus Areas:

Long Term Financial Stability
Individualized Services
Excellence in Services
Engagement in Ark's Vision and Mission

Organizational Goals

Focus Area	Goal
Financial Stability	Our financial position will be strengthened through our fundraising efforts, fees for service, efficiencies, and provision of non-traditional services.
Individualized Services	We will provide a variety of opportunities that meet the needs of our current and future clients in a responsible, efficient, and innovative manner.
Excellence in Services	Our individualized services, which promote personal achievement, opportunities for growth, and lifelong learning, will be delivered by highly trained, professional, and conscientious staff.
Engagement in Ark's Vision and Mission	Our leadership, staff, and community will commit to, participate in, and support our vision and mission with their time, talent, and resources.

1. Our financial position will be strengthened through our fundraising efforts, fees for service, efficiencies, and provision of non-traditional services.	
OBJECTIVES	Work Groups
1.1 – Review, revise, and implement an effective and efficient organizational structure	Operations Team: Chair – Bob
1.2 – Implement a long term fundraising strategy	Fundraising Team: Chair – Ruby
1.3 – Identify new clients, new services, and other revenue generating options.	CSM Meeting: Facilitator – Kayc Billing Team: Chair – LeRoy Operations Team: Chair – Bob
2. We will facilitate a variety of opportunities that meet the needs of our current and future clients in a responsible, efficient, and innovative manner.	
OBJECTIVES	Work Groups
2.1 – Utilize technology to increase independence	Technology Team: Chair – Tim
2.2 – Balance rights and responsibilities in order to promote a culture of acceptance, autonomy, and equality	Work Group: Chair - Kayc, Ami, Client Advocacy Group: Facilitator – Wendy
2.3 – Implement opportunities that meet the diverse needs of our current and future clients and stakeholders	Operations Team: Chair – Bob
3. Our individualized services, which promote personal achievement, opportunities for growth, and lifelong learning, will be delivered by highly trained, professional, and conscientious staff.	
OBJECTIVES	Work Groups
3.1 – Provide continual quality assurance in order to promote consistent and high caliber services	Work Group: Chair - Kayc, Carissa, & Jacob Monthly Leadership Development
3.2 – Continually evaluate, revise, and provide training based on the needs of our staff	Leadership Team: Chair – Bob plus - Carissa and Jacob
4. Our leadership, staff, and community will commit to, participate in, and support our vision and mission with their time, talent, and resources.	
OBJECTIVES	Work Groups
4.1 – Design and implement outreach and advocacy programs to promote a culture of awareness, understanding, and value for people with disabilities	Leadership Team: Chair - Bob
4.2 – Cultivate a Board of Directors that supports the organization with their time and talent	Bob and Board of Directors