Lutheran Services Florida
Strategic Plan
2017 - 2020

Safe Children.
Strong Families.
Vibrant Communities.
Lutheran Services Florida rests on a foundation of Christian faith & the Lutheran tradition of love and serving our neighbors. These principles are shaped by our continued relationship with our moral owners, the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and the Florida-Bahamas Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as well as with our stakeholders – our clients, our partners and the communities we serve.

**LSF History**

Ours is an interesting story, one that has impacted and influenced the history of modern Florida itself. LSF’s work started in response to the Cuban refugee crisis in 1980 during the Mariel Boatlift. The event is a familiar one, especially to those of us in Florida. Fidel Castro – in an historic and controversial move – unleashed scores of emigrants who made a dash for US shores. Within a few months, thousands upon thousands of Cubans arrived needing help with food, clothing, shelter, employment and overall resettlement. Lutheran churches mobilized to help the refugees. In 1982, Lutheran Ministries of Florida was formed to take over the responsibility for running these programs. Thus, these early hidden heroes officially launched our services.

In 2017, we entered into our 35th year of service. Thirty-five years is remarkable, particularly when one considers that 57% of all non-profits fail within 10 years of opening.¹

Over these past decades, we’ve built upon our foundation of faithful caring, compassion and generosity to help more people in need. We’ve expanded services to respond to the growing needs of Florida, including opening

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runaway youth shelters, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, child welfare, guardianship, homeless services, disaster response, and substance abuse and mental health treatment.

Today, our 1,400+ employees serve nearly 450,000 people a year, covering the state of Florida. In the last eight years, we focused our efforts on expanding our services and building the infrastructure required to support that expansion.

- We added over 750 employees in the last eight years and over $77M in Head Start and Early Head Start funding – allowing us to serve over 7,000 more children per year through these programs across the state
- We became the managing entity to ensure the provision of substance abuse and mental health services in 23 counties in Northeast Florida – the $110M in funding allows us to help over 74,000 people in the region receive the critical support they need
- We added child welfare case management services in Pinellas county – allowing us to help over 6,700 children and families per year who are in unsafe environments
- We added Comprehensive Refugee Services to our refugee services work – our foundational program – which provides employment, adult and vocational education, employability status assistance, case management, and child care services. We operate those programs in five geographical areas, helping refugees and immigrants find solace and comfort in their new communities
- We expanded and reconfigured our finance team and upgraded our processes and technology to meet the growing demands of the organization
- We enhanced our technology platform and our facilities to accommodate our growth

But, while we’re proud of our growth and our infrastructure investments, we are most proud of the human impact: Our work touches the lives of 1 in every 50 people across Florida.

As in the early days of Lutheran Ministries of Florida, we are motivated by faith. We are proud of the passion of our employees and motivated by the recognition they receive as experts. Our people are invited to present at conferences, to speak with elected officials, to serve as expert witnesses, and to provide advisory services to other organizations.

- In January of 2017, LSF Health Systems leadership spoke at the second European Community-Based Mental Health Services (EuCoMS) Network conference in Belfast, Ireland. Our leadership showcased the team’s incredible work to the EuCom group. They were intensely interested in the work we are
doing with the FL LINC (Linking Individuals Needing Care) project, our trauma-informed care collaborative, and our many innovative, community-based services. In participating, LSF helped other communities implement behavioral health best practices on an international scope.

- A joint partnership between LSF and Christ Episcopal Church in Jacksonville Beach created a new early learning facility for thirty-three Head Start and Early Head Start children. The Rhoda Martin Early Learning Center, located in Jacksonville Beach, Florida, officially opened in November of 2016. Also partnering with LSF and Christ Episcopal Church are The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, which conducted a feasibility study, and Beaches Community Fund, which provided a grant for the facility’s playground.

Yet, we remain most humbled by our clients’ successes. There are thousands of people throughout our communities who are separated from those they love, struggling to find hope and healing.

Consider our former client, Jasmine Randles, whose mother couldn’t care for her and her 7 siblings because of addiction. Jasmine was separated from her family at 13 years of age and permanently placed in foster care. Three years later Jasmine found herself pregnant, worried the baby would be taken from her and—like her—be placed in foster care. It was during this time that LSF became involved. Now she and her daughter live in an apartment together and Jasmine is raising her in a loving and stable environment, an environment very different from Jasmine’s childhood.

Or consider the Adio family, part of the Bantu tribe whose ancestors were brought to Somalia as slaves. This led to them being discriminated against during civil war in Somalia. Rebel forces raided their village, raping and killing many women and children. The father was an English teacher in Somalia, and many of the rebel forces that raided his village frowned upon Western traditions such as learning English. He was forced to end his English language program and flee with his family to a refugee camp. When the Adio family finally arrived in the United States, LSF helped them with clothing and furniture, helped them with job placements, and provided school supplies for the younger children. The children now attend local elementary, middle, and high schools in the Tampa Bay area. And, the father now works with LSF to help resettle more families from Somalia and the surrounding region.

Our growth is something to note and be proud of – but only because it means that we have a much broader impact. By faithfully serving so many more people than we could have ever imagined when we were founded over 35 years ago, we do more than change individual lives. We impact entire communities – making life safer, healthier, and happier for so many people.
LSF TODAY

*LSF Serves to bring God’s healing, hope and help to people in need in the name of Jesus Christ.*

Our mission has withstood the test of time. And our values – those guardrails that keep us from drifting – have evolved as we’ve grown, but remain rooted in Christian faith, cultural competency, collaboration with others, critical thinking, and good stewardship.

Over the last eight years, we’ve spent time and energy understanding our expertise, our imperative to serve, and our financial engine that supports the mission in order to ensure that we are evolving as the needs of our clients evolve. Our aim is to be absolutely prepared to positively impact the lives of those we serve and impact systems toward the common good so that all people and communities may thrive.

In 2016 we served nearly 450,000 clients across the state of Florida through our direct and indirect services.
Our services span the following areas:

- **Family Support.** Making a positive and transformative impact in our communities by strengthening families and protecting children.
- **Child Development.** Providing high quality child development, early childhood education, and alternative education through Early Head Start, Head Start, Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten, and charter school programs.
- **Adults & Elderly.** Creating healthier lives by protecting and advocating for adults who may otherwise be in vulnerable circumstances.
- **Refugee & Immigration.** Forming a welcoming community and happier future for refugees and immigrants seeking a new life and home.
- **LSF Health Systems.** Creating an integrated behavioral health system of care for uninsured children, adults, and families.

Our long term vision is bold.

**SAFE CHILDREN. STRONG FAMILIES. VIBRANT COMMUNITIES.**
## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

We believe we must remain vigilant in improving our ability to help our clients get the resources they need. We must ensure that our organization lives up to our mission and values – and that we are making a genuine, and constructive, impact in the communities we serve. We must start by taking great care of our people so that they are empowered and motivated to meet the disparate needs of our clients.

### Our Current Environment

Key cultural, environmental, and legislative trends affect how we do business and, more importantly, affect our clients directly every day. Our clients’ lives are positively and negatively impacted by the rise in social media. Our clients are often members of marginalized or targeted groups of people such as refugees, victims of human trafficking, persons of color, persons in the throes of poverty, or people with disabilities. And many of our clients struggle with the rising cost of living, limited affordable transportation and housing options, and overall changes in the workplace that make it harder to find living-wage employment.

In partnership with government agencies, we provide social services that are primarily funded through legislative mandates and government contracts. Elections, tax changes, budget cuts and shifting priorities are a consistent theme for a public provider. Our ability to be integrally involved in the conversations and to selflessly lead when we can is paramount to our success.

### Our Strategic Focus

Over the past eight years, we’ve focused on growth – making sure we are accessible to the populations in Florida who can benefit from working with LSF. And, we’ve focused on building our infrastructure – to ensure we have the right functions in place to support our work. As mentioned earlier, those efforts

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### Five Trends to Watch

| Politics, Privacy & Civil Rights | • Election results, tax changes, budget cuts, shifting policies, privatization, impacts of HIPPA, tension between regulation and technology |
| Technology | • Social media impacts on our populations, technical advances in communications (ex. Telemed), systems and applications for data management |
| Societal & Population Changes | • New issues continue to emerge: Opioid crisis, refugees, human trafficking victims, increased gun violence, aging population, mobility of families and individuals |
| Workforce Changes & Rising Cost of Living | • Fewer employment opportunities, workforce automation & knowledge worker impacts; rising costs in transportation, housing, food, healthcare, daycare |
| Evidence Based Approaches | • Service delivery models shifting; more outcome & evidence based approaches in market; innovation in service delivery |
have been successful. The organization has grown revenue by nearly $200M and our employee base increased by over 900 people. We have been blessed that we are now able to help 400,000 more people per year, but that growth also comes with challenges.

We are now embarking on a journey to mature our management processes – including our employee support and human resource processes, our project management processes, and our overall management communications approach. The opportunities to serve our clients are many – we must be ready and prepared for these opportunities to truly achieve transformational change.

To achieve our vision of safe children and strong families living in vibrant communities, we must ensure that the people we serve are resilient. We must be sure that we have the right people and tools available in the right place, meeting the right needs of people in our communities. Most importantly, we must exceed our moral owners, clients, employees, funders and donors expectations.

We’ve already laid the groundwork for the next three years. Within this past year, we strengthened our structured approach to leadership and management teams. We began to explore new ways we can better support our staff in their work. We launched several new communication vehicles and structures to bring the organization together and to keep people informed throughout our continued journey. And, we implemented standard project management expectations and guidelines to ensure that the work we are doing stays on track.

The work of this strategic plan reflects the recent pace of change at LSF and our need to ensure that our internal systems are solidly in place, so that we have a sustainable path forward. This internal focus means continued change. It will entail strong change management by LSF leadership. This is the roll-up-your-shirtsleeves sort of change that requires diligent attention to our people, processes, and procedures. But, it’s worth it. The impacts are exciting – improving our operational effectiveness will open the door for truly transformative change for our clients and their families.

The 2017-2020 LSF Strategic Plan

What you will see in the plan below is an emphasis for LSF to support our people and professionalize our processes. A stronger administrative infrastructure will not only enable us to preserve our hard earned growth, but will also provide the foundation for effecting transformative change in the lives of
our clients. Strengthening our organization is the key to unlocking the next levels of growth in helping Florida families.

Our long term vision is clear: **Safe Children, Strong Families, Vibrant Communities.** This requires that we are the best in all we do. The best place for our clients to find answers to their prayers and get the support they need. The best environment for our employees to be part of something bigger. The best place for people to invest their time, talent and treasure for the biggest return.

- Through being the very best operationally that we can be we can ensure that our clients are able to get the resources, the support and the treatments needed to meet their needs → we will aim for 100% satisfaction rate among our clients, moral owners, donors and funders.
- Our working environment is critical to ensuring we have a place where employees are able to effectively do their jobs and serve our clients → we will aim for 100% satisfaction rate among our employees.
- To be successful, we must effectively tell our story and demonstrate the value that we bring to our clients and their communities → we will aim to generate $10m in new funding per year and will be recognized as one of the best organizations of our type in the country and will be called upon by other social services organizations to help them achieve success.

**BEST Place for Our Clients:** We will ensure that we have operational processes in place to exceed our clients’, moral owners’, funders’ and donors’ expectations.

Our goal is to build a transformative and results driven management culture focused on achieving a 100% satisfaction rate among our moral owners, clients, funders and donors.

Our work should fit into the lives of our clients, rather than our clients fitting into our work. We must strive to understand the full picture of our clients’ needs and to create the right relationships to best support our clients in achieving their goals. Our clients, moral owners, funders and donors have a valuable perspective that can help guide our growth and our work. We must have the right processes in place to ensure fiscal stability and quality assurance throughout all of our programs. We will be an exemplary steward of funds, demonstrate a strong quality-minded culture, and actively engage with our clients, moral owners, donors and funders to ensure satisfaction.

Our clients will think of us first when they have a problem to solve. We will achieve this by delivering on the following:

- **Listen to our clients and families,** assess their needs and develop appropriate action steps with them. This will include implementing a standard process across our programs to help ensure that we can meet the needs of our clients or direct them to the resources that can help. A Client Engagement task force will be formed to develop the processes for managing our clients across the organization and to ensure goals and actions are in place to measure our success.
• Critical to achieving this strategic objective is our ability to understand our stakeholder satisfaction with our services and outcomes. We must be able to effectively respond to their feedback and direction. Our Client Engagement taskforce will also develop a client, funder & donor feedback loop to measure satisfaction and to strengthen our overall listening approach.

• We will be nationally recognized for our quality. We will build an organization-wide Quality Assurance department that ensures we are in compliance, audit-ready, quality focused, and continually improving our services based on regular quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

• Our work is inherently risky, but we take care to monitor and mitigate that risk through our risk management approach. We will expand our focus in this area to engage all staff in effectively identifying, monitoring and mitigating risk throughout the full organization.

• Our work is complex and highly regulated. We must effectively leverage technology to improve our record keeping and maintenance processes to ensure we are efficient and effective in servicing our clients.

• Our partnerships are critical to how effectively we serve our clients. We have strong relationship management skills and are known for our collaborative approach. We will formalize our relationship management processes to ensure that we are developing relationships consistently and effectively across the full organization to better serve our clients with the full complement of our service offerings. This will allow us to be actively engaged with our communities and partners, helping toward creating vibrant communities.

BEST Place for Our Employees: We will ensure we have the right processes, people and tools in place to maximize our impact with our clients.

Our goal is to become an Employer of Choice in our communities – evidenced by our progress towards a 100% employee satisfaction rate.

We know that our environment will change and that we will be blessed with new opportunities to serve. To be prepared for those opportunities, we must be nimble and able to handle quick additions, changes and shifts in to our program focus. Ultimately, to ensure that we most effectively serve our clients, we must do all we can to create the best environment for our employees.

We will achieve this by delivering on the following:

• Implement a comprehensive talent management system, including enhancing our branding, recruiting, onboarding, training, employee engagement, and succession planning approaches. This will include best practices related to systems, processes, tools, and behaviors.

• Ensure our performance management and compensation approach sufficiently ties our performance against agency and personal goals to reward, via fair and consistent pay practices for all. This will include best practices related to systems, processes, tools, and behaviors.
• Support the LSF Board efforts to strengthen the overall governance, board recruitment, and onboarding process of new board members and relationship with moral owners.

• Ensure that we are leveraging technology efficiently and effectively throughout the organization to ensure effective and efficient work environments and improve the services we offer to our clients.

• Continue enhancing our internal and external communications to better connect our work across lines of service and geographies, inclusive of driving a single LSF culture across the organization.

BEST Place for Investment: Ensure we are well positioned to be responsive to urgent needs and to organize scarce resources for the most effective results.

Our goal is to add $10m in new funding per year.

To be in the right place, we must actively engage in our communities through legislative involvement, advocacy work with - and on behalf of - our clients, actively monitoring of trends, and maintaining a keen focus on the evolving needs of our client base. We must also actively pursue opportunities to improve the services we offer clients, while being good stewards of our funding. This requires a keen focus on resource management to ensure we are adequately prepared to positively impact the lives of those we serve. And, it requires a proactive approach to partnerships and collaborative opportunities to serve people in need.

We will achieve this by delivering on the following:

• We must critically and continually look at the services we offer to ensure that the services we provide are generating outcomes consistent with our mission and vision. We will implement a strategic portfolio management approach to allow our leadership team to effectively assess each program and to determine if we should maintain, grow or refocus it.

• Our ability to effectively manage our budgeting, forecasting and fiscal review processes is paramount to our ability to best use the scarce resources we have to serve our clients. We will continue to improve our capacity in this arena through enhanced reporting, transparent discussions, and a prioritization process for managing discretionary funds.

• Our organization has grown tremendously over the past five years. To maximize the services we offer, we must become better and implement organization-wide grant acquisition. We will build an organization-wide opportunity management and grant acquisition process to ensure we are maximizing our opportunities to best serve the communities where we operate.

• We are often faced with opportunities for expansion through acquisition, merger or other partnerships. We will establish a standard due diligence process to evaluate such opportunities and protect our valuable funds and resources.

• The world of human services is complex and ever-changing. We believe we have a unique perspective on the needs of our clients and their communities. And, we believe that we have a moral imperative to help our legislative process use the funds they have to best serve those needs.
We will **expand our advocacy work** to help ensure we are positioned to help clients as legislative priorities and funding streams shift.

- Our business model is one of a public provider. Yet, to achieve the vision – particularly creating vibrant communities – we must **expand our funding streams** to better engage the communities we serve. We will develop a comprehensive donor engagement plan, grow our donor base and seek additional unrestricted and targeting revenues.
At LSF, we are passionate about the clients we serve. We believe in our mission. And, we believe that reaching our vision will help make Florida an even better place to live and raise a family. If you would like to learn more about our work, please contact us at info@lsfnet.org

To make a donation, please visit our website at LSFnet.org

Or call 1-800-651-1853