

**Strategic
Plan FY2021-
2025**



**Emergency
Family
Assistance
Association**

Introduction and Background

Since 1918, the Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA) has served the residents of Boulder County. Over the course of this more-than-100-year history, EFAA has maintained and expanded its relevancy and impact by evolving from an organization focused on meeting immediate basic needs to one also focusing on more systemically working to reduce poverty and homelessness. Through investments in individuals and families, as well as strategic education of the broader community, EFAA is strengthening Boulder County.

Proud of the work accomplished since its inception, EFAA's board, staff, participants and other stakeholders recognize that continuing its legacy of impact requires ongoing dialogue and reflection to ensure its strategic priorities, aims and associated goals are aligned with EFAA's current and aspired role in the community.

In 2014 with its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, EFAA embarked on an effort to build on the immediate safety net with programs to help families move toward longer-term resilience and use EFAA's voice to improve community conditions. This included charting a course for a strong future as a family resource center (FRC) in Boulder, formally becoming an FRC in 2017 and joining the Colorado Family Resource Center Association. Building on the progress gained over the last five years, EFAA engaged Joining Vision and Action (JVA), a mission-driven consulting firm, to help inform decision-making and facilitate a comprehensive strategic planning process to address the following guiding questions:

Guiding Questions

- What are the **community's needs**, and what is EFAA's comparative role in providing safety net, family strengthening and other services?
- How can EFAA's **strategic foundation** (i.e., mission, vision and core values) guide the organization into the future?
- What is the **alignment** and where are there gaps between strategic priorities and EFAA's role as an FRC?
- Where are there **organizational capacity** needs to implement strategies and goals?
- What is the **financial framework** required to support the strategic plan?

To address these questions, the seven-month planning process was intentionally designed to be inclusive, iterative and participatory, engaging a range of stakeholders and employing a mixed-methods approach, including:

- **A robust discovery period** that included:

- A landscape scan
- An online survey, which gathered feedback from 120 board, staff and committee members and volunteers
- Thirteen key informant interviews with donors, partners, funders and participants
- Five focus groups with participants (including a focus group of Spanish-speaking participants), staff and committees
- **A full-day board retreat** at which the board reflected on discovery findings, brainstormed EFAA's core identity and identified strategic priorities moving forward
- **Two facilitated board meetings** at which the board confirmed its core identity and identified five-year goals aligned with strategic priorities
- **An online feedback mechanism** to provide space for remote brainstorming and reflection on goals and associated objectives
- **Seven action planning sessions with staff** to refine objectives, narrow Year 1 priorities, and brainstorm aligned Year 1 actions and activities

The resulting strategic framework reflects a culmination of these efforts and, ultimately, brings a refined focus to the forefront and doubles down on EFAA's areas of strength, creating a path to sustained and enhanced impact over the next five years.

Setting a strong strategic foundation to build its strategic plan, EFAA reaffirmed its **core identity**—its vision, mission and values—to guide decision-making and steer its work. Grounded in these cornerstones, EFAA identified the primary priorities—its **strategic aims and supporting goals**—that will guide board oversight and staff efforts over the next five years. These components are also explored in the pages to come and are recognized as important and interconnected elements supporting a thriving Boulder County community.

Strategic Foundation: Core Identity

An organization's core identity is comprised of its vision, mission and core values. The vision describes the ideal future the organization seeks, while the mission highlights how the organization will contribute toward arriving at this destination. Underpinning everything are the core values—the key tenets to be upheld no matter what. This section shares EFAA's core identity.

Being clear on how an organization identifies itself is an important checkpoint for strategic planning and, ultimately, for the success of its efforts. This core identity serves as a strategic foundation on which all other activities are built and consists of an organization's mission, vision and core values. These elements are so intrinsic to the organization that they serve as its "North Star" and guide all decision-making. Through careful consideration and thoughtful discussion, EFAA identified and reaffirmed the following core identity elements:

Vision

A community where everyone is stable, healthy and thriving.

Mission

EFAA provides stabilizing services, innovative programs and transformative advocacy to strengthen families and create a thriving community.

Values

We value *community*.

We know we're all in this together. We create warm and inclusive environments, where compassion is an everyday practice and everyone feels like they belong. We focus on partnering with the people we serve and with organizations throughout Boulder County and beyond. We honor our connections and aspire to leverage everyone's contributions for the greater good.

We value *resiliency*.

We know that those we serve are capable and powerful drivers of their own successes. We enhance people's confidence, agency and sense of self-determination. We serve as both a safety net and a trampoline toward self-sufficiency. We are strengths-based and participant-led, encouraging people to step into their own leadership styles and stories. We believe those we serve and serve alongside are resourceful, and we prioritize dignity and personal choice.

We value *innovation*.

We know that thinking outside of the box produces transformation. We are willing to be vulnerable with our community and ourselves in order to find creative, inventive and courageous solutions. We share our knowledge and ideas, contributing to shifts in awareness, understanding and action at both individual and systems levels. We see ourselves as leaders in our field, and we

are willing to experiment and to be uncomfortable to create lasting change for all.

We value *integrity*.

We know that respect is the cornerstone of relationships, and we model this throughout our organization. We engender trust by earning it through being reliable, transparent, and true to our word and our values. We honor our community by sincerely doing our best and holding ourselves accountable for our actions.

We value *equity*.

We know that access to opportunity is a key to success. We celebrate diversity, build pathways for inclusion and seek a community where identity (e.g., age, class, gender, race, etc.) does not determine advantage or disadvantage. We make decisions and allocate resources that are responsive to divergent needs and empowering to participants. We confront our biases and aim to serve everyone in the most fair and just way. We remove barriers to services so that all community members can experience a healthy and thriving life.

We value *impact*.

We know that outcomes matter and are meaningful to our community. We succeed when we align individual needs with appropriate services, emphasizing quality over quantity. We are a results-oriented organization that pairs our goals with measurement systems to keep us focused and accountable. We believe that we are most effective when we implement timely evaluation, which informs our services and supports our sustainability.

Strategic Aims

Building on a general focus area of where an organization would like to effect change, a strategic aim helps to bring life and language to what the “big picture” outcomes will look like. The following section shares where EFAA will “aim” organizational efforts and resources to move the needle toward accomplishing its vision.

As a valued and sustainable family resource center (FRC), EFAA will focus on achieving the following strategic aims (i.e., priorities) over the next five years:

1. EFAA will continue to **strengthen the community safety net** by improving program accessibility (including to underserved populations) and improving quality and effectiveness of intake, referral, wraparound services and food programming.
2. EFAA will deepen efforts to **break the intergenerational cycle of poverty** by offering effective services that promote housing and economic stability.
3. EFAA will **help alleviate the impact of poverty and trauma on children** by supporting the whole family through approaches that strengthen children’s health, educational achievement and socio-emotional well-being.
4. EFAA will **create a more stable and resilient Boulder County** by offering all participants opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge, social capital and leadership abilities.
5. EFAA will **be a leader in housing solutions for families experiencing homelessness** by directly providing temporary housing and by collaborating with community partners to build communitywide efforts to address family homelessness.
6. EFAA will **foster a proactive policy and legislative environment** and increase community awareness and understanding of key issues facing lower-income residents by driving advocacy efforts forward as a trusted thought leader in the field.
7. EFAA will **strengthen overall internal capacity and decision-making** by conducting ongoing monitoring and evaluation, leveraging partnerships and making effective use of staff, volunteer, infrastructure and financial resources.

Each of these strategic aims will be supported by programming and organizational activities corresponding with the above. Respectively, these activity areas are: Basic Needs (1), Intensive Family Strengthening (2), Children’s Program (3), Community Enrichment (4), Housing (5) and Strategic Education (6).¹ In support of these areas, Capacity Building (7) will also be explored and addressed across the organization.

The pages in the following section are grouped by these seven areas. For each area, the measures that will indicate success in achieving the aim are described, along with the specific goals to be achieved. For easy reference, EFAA’s core identity, strategic aims and goals have been combined into one graphic on the following page that shares “at a glance” the primary and guiding components of the FY2021–2025 EFAA Strategic Plan.

¹ As with any strategic plan, ensuring that activities are aligned with organizational strategy and community need is important. With a clear strategy informed by the information gathered through the discovery process as a foundation, ongoing review and analysis of community demographics, gaps in services and activities should occur to assess alignment (e.g., with the understanding that the older adult population will continue to grow as will the need to serve that population, EFAA will want to monitor potential gaps and identify its role in addressing).

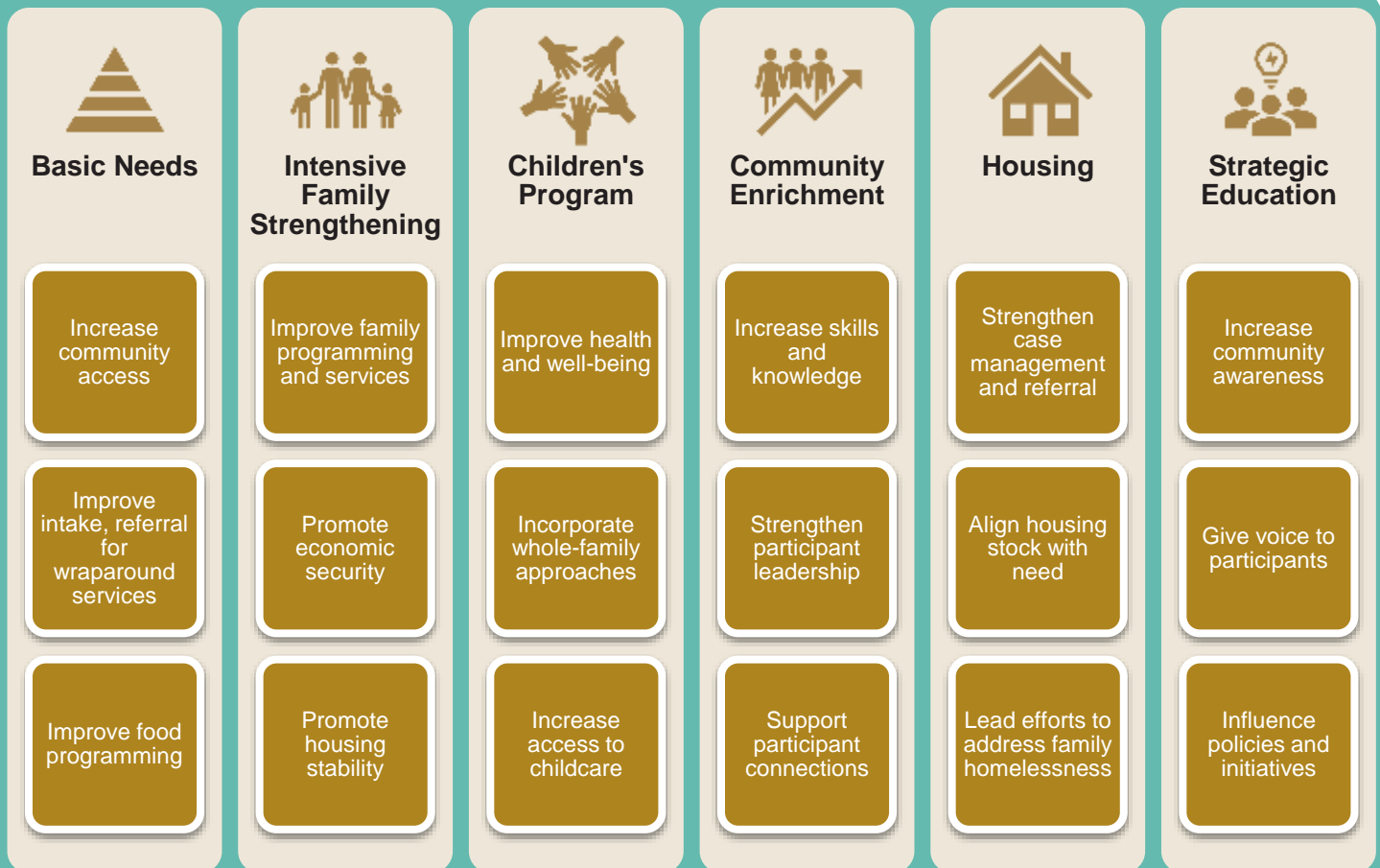
At a Glance, EFAA Strategic Plan 2021-

VISION: A community where everyone is stable, healthy and thriving.

MISSION: EFAA provides stabilizing services, innovative programs and transformative advocacy to strengthen families and create a thriving community.

VALUES: community, resiliency, innovation, integrity, equity, impact

Strategic aims and goals



Capacity

Family Resource Center (FRC) quality standards, partnerships, staff, volunteers, monitoring and evaluation, marketing and communications, facility

Goals

To aid in the achievement of the strategic aims, goals are developed to bring further definition to the desired results that are envisioned. Organized by aim area, the following sections share the supporting goals and the identified targets for gauging success toward the goals.

Basic Needs

Strategic Aim: EFAA will continue to strengthen the community safety net by improving program accessibility (including to underserved populations) and improving quality and effectiveness of intake, referral wraparound services and food programming.

What Achievement Looks Like

Markers of success toward this aim include:

- Increased use of existing programs
- Lowered barriers to access
- Expanded access to underserved populations
- Improved intake processes (e.g., reduced wait times, paperwork, etc.)
- Expanded direct financial assistance
- Increased food security
- Improved quality and quantity of food distributed

Goals

To move the needle toward accomplishing this aim, EFAA has identified the following goals for the next five years:

Increase **community access** to basic needs programming

Improve quality and effectiveness of **intake, referral and wraparound services**

Improve quality and effectiveness of **food programming**



Intensive Family Strengthening

Strategic Aim: EFAA will begin to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty by offering effective services that promote housing and economic stability.

What Achievement Looks Like

Markers of success toward this aim include:

- Improved participant experiences
- Sustained positive impacts of program participation
- Increased incomes
- More stable employment (e.g., type, length)
- Enhanced employment skills of participants
- Expanded access to multi-month rental assistance to prevent homelessness
- Increased access to and impact of programs that support access to affordable housing

Goals

To move the needle toward accomplishing this aim, EFAA has identified the following goals for the next five years:

Improve quality and effectiveness of family strengthening programs and services
Promote improvements to the longer-term economic security of participants
Promote longer-term housing stability



Children's Program

Strategic Aim: EFAA will help alleviate the impact of poverty and trauma on children by supporting the whole family through approaches that strengthen children's health, educational achievement and socio-emotional well-being.

What Achievement Looks Like

Markers of success toward this aim include:

- Increased access to recreation and educational opportunities and academic support resources for school-age children
- Increased access to early childhood development screenings and developmentally appropriate activities for children ages 0–5 (e.g., connections to supportive services, parental knowledge)
- Increased availability of two-generation approaches and child-focused case management
- Improved staff understanding and awareness of two-generation approaches
- Enhanced linkages across program areas (e.g., parents are accessing the supports they need for children to thrive)
- Increased awareness of available options
- Increased use of childcare aligned with family need

Goals

To move the needle toward accomplishing this aim, EFAA has identified the following goals for the next five years:

Improve children's physical and mental **health**, educational achievement and socio-emotional **well-being** with priority on intensive programming for families participating in EFAA's housing programs

Incorporate **whole-family approaches** across EFAA's programming

Increase EFAA participants' access to affordable **childcare options**



Community Enrichment

Strategic Aim: EFAA will create a more stable and resilient Boulder County by offering all participants opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge, social capital and leadership abilities.

What Achievement Looks Like

Markers of success toward this aim include:

- Increased participation in core skill and family support programming, as determined by participants
- Increased incorporation of participant feedback into services
- Increased participation in social capital enhancing groups

Goals

To move the needle toward accomplishing this aim, EFAA has identified the following goals for the next five years:

Increase participant skills and knowledge
Leverage and strengthen participant leadership abilities
Facilitate and support participant community connections



Housing

Strategic Aim: EFAA will be a leader in housing solutions for families experiencing homelessness by directly providing temporary housing and by collaborating with community partners to build communitywide efforts to address family homelessness.

What Achievement Looks Like

Markers of success toward this aim include:

- Increased use of community resources
- Increased participation in community enrichment programs
- Improved Colorado Family Support Assessment score of family resiliency scores
- Successful housing exits
- Aligned allocation of housing resources based on community need
- Active participation in developing a more integrated countywide system

Goals

To move the needle toward accomplishing this aim, EFAA has identified the following goals for the next five years:

Strengthen case management and referral services
Align housing stock with need of EFAA participants
Lead communitywide efforts and systems to address family homelessness



Strategic Education

Strategic Aim: EFAA will foster a proactive policy and legislative environment and increase community awareness and understanding of key issues facing lower-income residents by driving advocacy efforts forward as a trusted thought leader in the field.

What Achievement Looks Like

Markers of success toward this aim include:

- Increased development and execution of campaigns and coalitions
- Increased participation in community outreach events
- Increased partnerships with education and advocacy organizations
- Increased participant engagement in policy and advocacy efforts (e.g., those trained, those providing direct testimony)
- Increased advocacy on public policy and legislative issues

Goals

To move the needle toward accomplishing this aim, EFAA has identified the following goals for the next five years:

Increase **community awareness** of, and strengthen coalition/campaign participation around, key issues facing lower-income residents

Give **voice to participants** on the issues

Influence public **policies, initiatives** and legislation



Capacity Building

Strategic Aim: EFAA will strengthen overall capacity and decision-making by conducting ongoing monitoring and evaluation, leveraging partnerships and making effective use of staff, volunteer, infrastructure and financial resources.

What Achievement Looks Like

Markers of success toward this aim include:

- Improved scores in FRC Quality Standards, moving all indicators toward high quality
- Increased incorporation of participant feedback to improve/reshape programs
- Enhanced communication of key performance metrics
- Ongoing data reviews (i.e., continuous quality improvement)
- Sufficient and aligned headquarter and satellite office space to meet current plan for future needs
- Implementation of solutions identified through IT assessment
- Improved use of technology in service delivery
- Continued high scores on employee engagement measures
- Improved quality recruitment and staff retention
- Increased professional development and staff engagement opportunities
- Improved allocation of volunteer time with organizational needs
- Increased awareness of EFAA beyond current network



Goals

To move the needle toward accomplishing this aim, EFAA has identified the following goals for the next five years:

Improve EFAA's implementation of Family Resource Center (FRC) Quality Standards
Strengthen strategic partnerships
Align staff capacity with organizational strategy and needs
Align volunteer opportunities with organizational needs
Embed and strengthen monitoring and evaluation activities
Enhance EFAA's marketing and communications
Improve technology use and access
Align facility functionality with organizational needs

