



Strategic Plan

2024-2026

Approved by Board December 7, 2023

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Dear Stakeholder:

As we embark upon a new phase of our Strategic Plan, everyone at Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) is excited to see a future bright with new programs and energized with new technology. We are focused on bringing the innovations in our rapidly evolving world into the lives of the children and adults who we support while never losing sight of the importance of the human touch - the caring and dedication of our workforce.

This past year, the Board Strategic Planning Committee and DDI staff worked on updating our current Strategic Plan. We contemplated our mission statement and affirmed our focus on helping children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities experience personal growth and fulfillment. We engaged our stakeholders in the planning process and discussed what does personal growth and fulfillment even look like? We questioned what are we really trying to achieve and how do we best express it in this Plan. And most importantly, how do we measure success when sometimes the best outcome of an initiative is an intangible, like happiness?

In many ways, the 2024-2026 DDI Strategic Plan is a description of our preferred future for the people we support, our workforce and our organization. It is not just a management tool, but rather, it is a playbook for all of our stakeholders to help us achieve that preferred future.

We look forward to you joining us on the journey.

Sincerely,

Kim M.Kubasek
Chief Executive Officer

James Fogarty, Ed.D.
Chairperson, Board of Directors

DDI Overview

Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) provides compassionate supports and services to meet the emotional, educational, therapeutic, and vocational needs of children and adults with autism¹ and other developmental disabilities. Founded by parents in 1961, DDI has grown to be a dynamic, nonprofit, multi-site agency serving 1500 people each day.

Over six decades, we have built a strong reputation for providing exceptional services for all people in our programs, and in particular those who present with the most complex needs. At our core, DDI believes that every person deserves every opportunity to live a rich and meaningful life. Therefore, DDI provides the highest standards of individualized services, supporting people on their path of personal growth and fulfillment.

Our agency recognizes the unique needs of each person we care for, maintaining the highest standards of teaching and training for our children and adults, their families, and our staff. We pride ourselves on utilizing research-based methods across all of our programs.

Our Mission:

We help children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities experience personal growth and fulfillment.

Our Vision:

To be Long Island's leading provider of innovative services for people with autism and other developmental disabilities.

Our Core Values:

Core Values guide all that we do. Our Core Values and how we practice them:

- ❖ **Integrity** – We adhere to moral and ethical principles
- ❖ **Dignity** – We treat each other as being worthy of honor and respect
- ❖ **Compassion** – We act with caring and kindness
- ❖ **Teamwork** – We work together to achieve common goals

¹ Within this document the term “autism” is synonymous with “autism spectrum disorders”.

Summary of DDI Programs (as of October 2023)

We employ a dedicated staff of 2,255 people (1,471 FTEs) working to support children and adults. Some of the programs in which they work are:

Program	Description	Number Served
Early Intervention (Birth-3 yrs.)	For infants and toddlers, our emphasis is on early evaluation, diagnosis and treatment. 3 locations and home-based services	33
Preschool (3-5 yrs.)	Children have access to a continuum of settings from least restrictive to most restrictive in order to meet each child's unique needs. More than 90% of our preschoolers return to their home school district by the time they are ready for kindergarten. 3 locations	383
School Age (5-21 yrs.)	Older children whose challenges are beyond the capabilities of their own school district may enter our program designed to support their individual special education needs. 3 locations	209
Children's Residential Program (5-21 yrs.)	Upon the recommendation of their own school districts, and with the approval of the State Education Department, some children reside in our residential program, New York State's third largest children's residential services program, designated by the State as a Center of Excellence. 2 locations	65
Adult Residential Program	Community-based homes provide the opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities to live as independently as possible and become integral community members, neighbors, co-workers, and volunteers. 41 locations	231
Adult Day Program (including vocational programs and All Without Walls)	Robust opportunities for the furtherance of education, skills training, vocational development, supported employment, family respite and transportation help to ensure the most desirable pursuits are possible for the adults in our care. 9 service sites plus participating employers	417
Self-Direction	Support to individuals and families in the community. Individuals directly manage their services and budget with the assistance of a support broker and fiscal intermediary services provided by DDI.	305
Respite Services	Center-based at 3 DDI locations for eligible families of children and adults.	56

The Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning is a continuous process which allows management the opportunity to reaffirm to the Board and its stakeholders the agency's effort to effectively fulfill its mission.






Early in 2023, the Board of Directors Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of members of the Board and Senior Management, was charged with updating DDI's Strategic Plan.

The strategic planning process once again included the valuable input of internal and external stakeholders to help us better envision our agency's future. It also continued to include the valuable guidance and feedback from each Board committee charged with oversight of the individual areas of strategic focus within the Plan, referred to as its "Pillars."

The pillars in this 2024-2026 Strategic Plan include:

- I. Workforce
- II. Program Excellence
- III. Information Management and Technology
- IV. Fundraising
- V. Public Image and Communications

There are five guiding principles to which DDI is committed and which serve as the underpinnings for this Plan's goals and objectives:

-  *Valuing People – Personal growth and fulfillment is achieved when people feel valued.*
-  *Continuous Improvement – Excellence is limitless, so we will always seek to become better at what we do.*
-  *Measurable Outcomes – The quality of our services and work must be quantifiable.*
-  *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging – True collaboration happens when we promote respect, understanding and social justice.*
-  *Agility – Efficient response to change will foster opportunities for greater success.*

Goals and Objectives for each pillar within this 2024-2026 Strategic Plan were updated, discussed by the respective Board committees and then reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee. The Strategic Plan was approved by DDI's Board of Directors at its December 2023 meeting.

Keys to Organizational Success

After six decades, Developmental Disabilities Institute stands as one of Long Island's largest providers of services to children and adults with disabilities. Our agency is highly respected within our industry for our successes in caring for people with autism and other developmental disabilities, especially children and adults with high intensity support needs due to behavioral challenges.

We have identified the following keys to DDI's success. These keys describe the elements that fuel our accomplishments. They are elements of our culture and business practices that help us to achieve the outcomes for which we strive and serve as the underpinnings of this Strategic Plan.

Valuing the people we support – Need to be highly inclusive of people we support/serve and involve them in decision making to the greatest possible extent.

Valuing our workforce – Nothing is more important to the success of our agency. We are people inspired by purpose®.

Health and wellness – Commitment to the physical and mental health of our workforce and the people we serve.

Advocacy – Actively advocating in all matters affecting our services and our workforce.

Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging – Foster differing perspectives, creative ideas and broader thinking through a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Communications – Being transparent and accessible to all individuals we serve, families and our workforce.

Recruitment and retention – Developing and implementing creative ideas to build and maintain our workforce.

Collaboration – We are part of a larger community and are most successful when we work in partnership with other organizations, groups and individual champions to achieve shared objectives.

Span of ages served – Maintaining lifelong relationships with individuals we support and their families through a continuum of services.

Children and adults with intensive support needs – Serving children and adults with intensive behavioral needs distinguishes us from other providers.

Evidence-based practices – A commitment to research and evidence based practices.

Autism expertise – A continuing commitment to our legacy as one of Long Island's earliest and leading autism experts.

Growth – Opportunities to grow our services are pursued commensurate with our workforce and funding resources.

Compliance – Ensure integrity in all business dealings and adherence to the rules and regulations of our oversight agencies and authorities.

Financial stability – Diligence in all financial matters, including fiscally responsible growth.

Technology – Optimize technology to advance the independence of the people we support, for business efficiencies and for educational purposes.

Assumptions

Assumptions were used to form the basis for the strategic thinking that went into this Plan. While these assumptions relate to expected future conditions that are beyond our control, they nonetheless help to define many of the opportunities and the challenges we face.

Types of services – There will be demand for new models of services and supports that are more personalized and flexible as a person’s needs change over his/her lifetime and will have to adjust to a growing senior population

Delivery of services – Individuals served and their families will expect and request more community/home based services and supports rather than segregated, site based services.

Advocacy – Greater engagement of workforce, families and the people we support in active advocacy will help steer our industry’s regulatory and reimbursement systems.

Information management and technology – Using technology to identify and gather meaningful data that assist in decision-making, remote service delivery and work opportunities will be a key to provider success. Artificial intelligence will be part of our world.

OPWDD rate methodology – The proposed rate methodology will be driven principally by acuity of the person served, with regional adjustment, resulting in the elimination of individual provider rates.

Education reimbursement – New rate setting methodologies will be forthcoming although it is unknown if they will benefit or fiscally challenge the program.

Pool of workers – The talent pool upon which DDI relies for all of its positions will remain extremely competitive principally due to wage issues, the regulatory environment that makes it challenging to work in the field.

Health concerns – Protecting the physical and mental health of the individuals we support and our workforce will become an increased focus.

Transparency – Metrics that report the quality of our services will be available to the public.

OPWDD Programs – Self Direction will continue to grow statewide, particularly for younger adults.

Long Island population trends – The older adult population is growing on LI while the child population is shrinking. The prevalence of children diagnosed with autism has risen. These census trends will make recruitment of talent more difficult. It will also make recruitment of typical preschoolers more difficult for the Early Childhood program although the overall demand for autism services is anticipated to remain high.

The Strategic Pillars

Pillar I – Workforce

Maintain a diverse and sustainable workforce to provide quality services, create an appropriate work/life balance for our staff, and ensure employees are satisfied and engaged.

As we aspire to our Mission of helping children and adults achieve personal fulfillment, and as we pursue program excellence in addressing their needs, we require a reliable, committed, talented, well-trained, and motivated workforce to support the people we serve.

DDI's workforce efforts will focus on providing professional growth opportunities and creating an inclusive culture that recognizes employees to ensure we retain our dedicated and hardworking workforce. People inspired by purpose®, our Employee Value Proposition, clearly communicated and applied is a vital element of this effort.

The key to the success of our Workforce Pillar will be wisely and innovatively investing our available resources in initiatives that will make employees feel valued, supported, and engaged to make certain that DDI retains and develops our best talent.

Objectives

- 1. Reinforce a culture of trust, open communication, appreciation, and respect for differences in alignment with DDI's Employee Value Proposition, our core values and the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.**
- 2. Cultivate an exceptional and inclusive workforce at all levels by enhancing and expanding upon our approach to recruitment and retention, while also delivering a comprehensive total rewards package that ensures employees can achieve a standard of living that supports dignity and their personal life needs.**
- 3. Improve and increase adoption of new and existing tools and technology to maximize our investments, glean actionable insights, and make data-driven decisions.**
- 4. Optimize training, professional development, and wellness initiatives for our workforce by leveraging our partnership with the Quality Resource Network as well as other agencies and universities.**
- 5. Develop and monitor effective succession plans to ensure continuity of quality services and operations.**
- 6. Encourage our employees to make mental health a priority by providing them a flexible and healthy work environment that promotes work/life balance, expands upon remote work opportunities, and perpetually reviews ways in which to make schedules as flexible as possible.**

The Strategic Pillars

Pillar II - Program Excellence

DDI is committed to innovating our scope and scale of services and will continue to strive for higher levels of program excellence. We will meet the emerging needs of the people we serve with fiscally viable, effective, and innovative supports and services.

Our intended trajectory will allow us to develop a coordinated and consistent strategy to achieve a continuum of care across services; build out our research arm and increase operational efficiency through the incorporation of technology.

To achieve these goals, we will continue to invest in the enhancement of training for front line team members, increasing levels of expertise in current program models. This investment will inevitably allow for future expansion of more diversified and coordinated strategies across services.

With increased emphasis placed on less restrictive care settings, we will continue to expand upon program models that underscore a culture of dignity of risk. Supporting an individual's right to take reasonable risks will be essential to growth and robust learning experiences.

With intentional focus, DDI will concentrate program excellence efforts on the value of our services, creating systems that will measure quality outcomes as an important metric of the work we perform. We will also expand our research and partnerships while positioning ourselves as desired thought leaders in our industry.

Objectives

- 1. Develop a continuum of program models and services across all programs that address changing demands and challenges. Ensure opportunities for those we support to participate in more integrated life experiences through less restrictive program environments.**
- 2. DDI will be established as a coveted strategic partner, through the creation of applied research opportunities.**
- 3. Advance our use of identified and implemented technology to support daily life opportunities for people in all our programs while addressing workforce challenges.**

The Strategic Pillars

Pillar III – Information Management and Technology

DDI will have secure and reliable technology solutions to enable our workforce to work more efficiently and to enhance the supports and services we provide to our children and adults.

The adoption of emerging and evolving technology solutions provides opportunities to improve organizational efficiency and teamwork while advancing the objectives of all DDI pillars promoting our mission of growth, fulfillment and independence for the people we support. Technologies are blurring the lines between the physical and digital ecosystem while using data management to ingest, store, organize, maintain and use the data created and collected, to benchmark achievement and ensure the best data driven outcomes.

While supporting the growing use of Information Technology, we will ensure that our technologies keep our data and infrastructure secure and reliably available. We will also seek to automate manual work processes to create more available time for our employees to work efficiently.

Objectives

- 1. Optimize the functionality and reliability of all current information and communication technology.**
- 2. Identify and use analytics to help drive organizational decision-making and effectiveness in order to achieve program excellence.**
- 3. Ensure DDI has stable, secure and scalable IT operations to minimize disruption from emerging threat trends and disasters.**
- 4. Expand the portability of clinical and business supports in order to provide greater outreach in the delivery of services and work efficiency for our staff.**
- 5. Explore artificial intelligence tools to gain insights, identify patterns and predict outcomes to provide recommendations to allocate resources, improve our impact and achieve our goals.**

The Strategic Pillars

Pillar IV – Fundraising

DDI will strive to secure funding to support priority programmatic, capital and workforce needs to help ensure our Mission that the children and adults we serve achieve personal fulfillment.

To advance DDI program excellence and workforce satisfaction, Development will establish a compelling case for giving in support of priority needs that require funding, will be championed internally and externally, align with funder interests, have the necessary infrastructure, staffing and ability to create and track metrics.

Critical to the success of the Fundraising goal is the creation of a culture of giving supported by collaboration and ownership amongst stakeholders including development, fiscal, programmatic, marketing, and operational staff, Board, Committees, families, and foundation, corporate and individual donors.

Education, giving and engagement opportunities, a donor Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, benchmarks, and ongoing analysis required to achieve the Fundraising goal will be implemented.

Objectives

1. **Identify priority organizational funding needs.**
2. **Build internal awareness, support and a unified message for priority needs.**
3. **Expand the use of our donor CRM system to provide the analysis necessary to guide fundraising.**
4. **Establish a culture of giving and community to support and champion DDI fundraising needs.**

The Strategic Pillars

Pillar V – Public Image and Communications

Effectively communicate to raise awareness, shape perceptions, and compel target audiences to action in support of DDI's mission.

DDI strives for a public image that is consistent with being an employer of choice and a leader in program excellence. Therefore, we affirm our commitment to the development of DDI's public image and a sustained effort at superior communications in order that we may establish more meaningful connections with all stakeholders.

The foundation on which those connections are made starts with a clear identity and compelling narrative. Revitalizing DDI's brand will extend the reach and depth of our mission's impact as it relates to workforce, program excellence and development.

To engage staff and program participants more effectively, we need training, methods, standards and processes in place. Numerous studies show the impact of effective workplace communications on culture, engagement, productivity and retention. Our focus on improving organizational communications will help us be better listeners and better leaders, ensuring we are communicating the right messages, the right way, and at the right time to all our audiences.

Among our audiences, families in particular are looking to DDI for information, education, resources and community support. An engagement plan that fulfills these needs while delivering greater value and positive outcomes will only strengthen the partnership and support of the families we serve.

Objectives

- 1. Build a brand that people want to be a part of.**
- 2. Improve organizational communications to increase awareness, engagement, productivity, satisfaction, and retention.**
- 3. Create meaningful connections and community for DDI families.**
- 4. Emerge as a leader in the Long Island region when it comes to advocating for and with people with disabilities, their staff and families.**