



# Five Year Strategic Plan 2021-2026

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary \_\_\_\_\_ Page 3

Authorization \_\_\_\_\_ Page 3

Organizational Profile \_\_\_\_\_ Page 3

Issues and Challenges \_\_\_\_\_ Page 4

Mission and Vision \_\_\_\_\_ Page 4

Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Objectives \_\_\_\_\_ Page 5

Acknowledgements \_\_\_\_\_ Page 8

## Executive Summary

Since 1962, Highfields has been providing opportunities for youth and families. While the programs and services offered have changed over the years, Highfields' commitment to its mission and vision has remained constant. The plan is written with a five-year outlook and reviewed and updated every two-three years to ensure progress.

The overall purpose of the plan is to provide a clear and concise vision for the next five years and ensure the commitment to achieving the six priorities identified by Highfields, Inc. The major priorities are detailed with goals and objectives in the strategic plan and include:

- Programs and Services
- Development
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Financial Stability and Growth
- Employee Investment
- Facilities and Infrastructure

The strategic framework detailed in this document is the basis for Highfields to collaborate across all levels of the organization on attaining the goals and objectives in each priority area. The Senior Leadership Team regularly reviews and presents these areas to the Board of Directors to receive their feedback and guidance. The Leadership Team and employees will review priorities and progress annually at the spring agency roundtable. The Continuous Quality Improvement Committee within Highfields also monitors the implementation of the plan at quarterly meetings.

## Authorization

Highfields Board of Directors, Leadership Team, and employees participate in regular meetings where a range of information, such as financial reports, program statistics, survey results, and more, is reviewed to ensure ongoing awareness of the agency's performance, strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Based on this key information, the Board, Leadership Team, and employees partner to establish organizational goals and objectives relevant to each priority area. Once the plan is finalized and approved by the Board, the plan is posted on Highfields' website for review by the public.

## Organizational Profile

Highfields, Inc. began in 1962 as a residential camp for troubled boys in Ingham County. The founders truly believed that with the right opportunities and resources, people can change their lives for the better. Over time, Highfields recognized the importance of providing support to families at their earliest point of need and sought opportunities to intervene beyond residential treatment. Today, Highfields has grown from a small camp to a multi-purpose, human services organization that provides services across 13 counties in Michigan. In addition to the foundational residential services, the agency also serves children and families in their homes, communities, and schools.

At the Onondaga Campus, residential treatment provides Phoenix, a long-term program, and Stabilization, a short-term program. They are both designed to help adjudicated boys, ages 11-17, change their behaviors and thought processes. Through

residential services, youth learn independent living skills and begin to take responsibility for their own lives.

Community Services operate out of four satellite offices to provide a number of different programs aimed at addressing family stability and mental health needs. These programs incorporate evidence-based practices to keep families happy, healthy and safe, with an emphasis on preventing out-of-home placement and need for hospitalization for the children. Services are provided in the families' homes and communities to best suit their needs.

Educational Services are comprised of four programs. Breakthrough is an experiential education program designed to build leadership, communication and teamwork for groups of all types, and is based in Onondaga. Reaching Higher is an after-school program that Highfields provides in eight schools across the greater Lansing and Jackson areas. It creates a learning environment for elementary and middle school students, which helps reinforce academics and builds social skills. Ingham Academy and PRIDE are programs provided in an alternative high school setting in conjunction with the court and school district. They help students learn life and social skills to become more knowledgeable and confident in their own skills and abilities.

## **Issues and Challenges**

In the fall of 2020, Highfields collaborated with Spectrum Consulting Group to assist Highfields' strategic planning process. This process included a SWOT analysis, PEST analysis, and surveys of employees, senior leadership, and the Board. The central challenges identified through that analysis include enhancing financial stability, embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion, increasing employee retention, diversifying the fund portfolio, and adapting to external challenges (i.e., COVID-19, the changing economic environment, virtual landscape, etc). Effectively adapting to virtual platforms is key to retaining the quality of services in a competitive market.

The analysis also identified strengths and opportunities in expanding evidence-based programs, maintaining strong leadership and commitment to positive culture, initiating a strong foundation for diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, and operating with flexibility, among others.

To address these and other priority areas, Senior Leadership and the Board of Directors established the following mission, vision, strategic goals and objectives.

## **Mission & Vision**

### ***Our Mission:***

*To provide opportunities to children, youth and families to become more responsible for their own lives and strengthen their relationships with others.*

### ***Our Vision:***

*Ignite strength, hope and resilience to create bright futures for children, families and communities.*

## Strategic Priorities, Goals and Objectives

[As noted by the COA:

Goals are broad statements related to the organization's mission that state what the organization hopes and expects to achieve. Objectives are specific measurable steps or milestones used to measure progress toward achieving identified goals. Strategies for achieving each goal should be specific]

### **Priority 1: Programs and Services**

**Vision Statement:** Provide high quality programs and services with fidelity that result in positive outcomes among children and families.

#### **Priority Goals**

1. Strengthen community support and awareness in the counties where Highfields' presence isn't as "visible and known."
  - a. Identify and prioritize the counties and communities that need to be addressed and formulate a plan to do so by the end of 2021. (Clare, Isabella, Ionia and Lenawee)
2. Improve the outcomes database and tracking procedures, helping staff use data strategically to improve outcomes among children and families served by Highfields.
  - a. Fully implement the Bizstream/Youth Center (database) into the residential program by December, 2021.
  - a. Review FamCare for its long term usefulness/effectiveness as a Community Services database by February, 2022.
3. Continue to implement Evidence Based Programs (EBP) where possible in conjunction with the state's move toward the "Families First Prevention Act" allowing for Title IV-E federal "prevention dollars" to be spent on "out of home placements.". (note: this legislation requires EBP be used by the state) (ongoing)

### **Priority 2: Development**

**Vision Statement:** Create a growing, balanced development plan to support Highfields' programs, employees, and ensure positive outcomes for children and families.

#### **Priority Goals:**

1. Improve donor engagement to attract and retain donors
  - a. Utilize existing metrics to measure new and returning donors, and creating long term data trends.
2. Utilize our employees to be our ambassadors; educate them all about the entire array of Highfields' services.
  - a. Allocate time in each of our annual staff roundtables to highlight the diversity of Highfields programs.

- b. Produce information to be used during new staff orientation that highlights Highfields programs (by March, 2022).
3. Create a balanced fundraising plan to attain major gifts and increase planned giving.
  - a. Produce/create an annual fundraising calendar that includes all aspects of a balance development plan, by December, 2021.

### **Priority 3: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

**Vision Statement:** Create an empowering environment based on principles of equity and inclusion that fosters the exchange of ideas, recognizes and challenges bias, and emphasizes the value of our collective differences to deliver equitable services to children and families.

#### **Priority Goals:**

1. Expand the capacity for all employees and leadership of Highfields to be able to discuss cultural differences, and address those differences with an educated, sensitive and trained response.
  - a. Develop a DEI Road Map for Highfields by August, 2021.
  - b. Implement Phase I "Leadership Transformation" (education, self assessment and coaching) by August, 2021.
  - c. Implement Phase II "Staff Transformation" (education, self assessment and coaching) by March, 2022.
2. Create a long-term sustainable DEI plan that will be staff lead.
  - a. Establish a DEI Council to lead Highfields through the implementation of the identified DEI Road Map by February, 2022.
  - b. Work with a consultant to help guide/coach Highfields through this process.
3. Review and ensure all policies, procedures, and resources are equitable and inclusive across Highfields.
  - a. Utilize the DEI Council to provide leadership in this area by December, 2022.

### **Priority 4: Financial Stability and Growth**

**Vision Statement:** Equip employees, services, and infrastructure with necessary resources to effectively sustain programming.

#### **Priority Goals:**

1. Analyze Highfields' different revenue streams and improve Highfields profitability rate.
  - a. Using existing metrics, track the agencies revenue vs expenses on a monthly basis.

- b. Evaluate each program revenue “center” by percentage to identify and plan for risk mitigation (ensuring that a balanced approach to revenue diversification exists) by December, 2021.
- 2. Move Highfields financial software and accounting to the “Cloud.”
  - a. Fully implement “cloud based financial software” by December, 2021.
- 3. Evaluate/monitor all contracts and programs for their financial viability.
  - a. Establish benchmarks for Highfields’ 5 biggest programs of “base revenue” needed to ensure that the program would be profitable as a “stand alone” by March, 2022.
  - b. Track this information on a quarterly/monthly basis.

**Priority 5: Employee Investment**

**Vision Statement:** Invest in a workplace culture that supports, engages, and develops employees to positively impact children and families.

**Priority Goals:**

- 1. Sustaining engagement of employees through open, consistent, effective communication to all employees and acting responsively to their needs
  - a. Engage in monthly email updates, allowing for feedback loops from employees.
  - b. Have quarterly employee newsletters.
  - c. Hold agency roundtable meetings 2x each year.
  - d. Plan for recording/sharing of meetings/information for employees who cannot attend in person meetings.
- 2. Conduct a review of job classification/paygrade system
  - a. Form a task group by August, 2021 with work to be completed by September, 2021.
- 3. Conduct a wage study to identify and address those positions with the greatest wage disparity in the study.
  - a. Form a task group by September, 2021 with work to be complete by October, 2021.
- 4. Providing effective training and necessary resources to support continuing excellence of services for children, families, and communities
  - a. Evaluate resources to potentially allow for the hiring of a training coordinator by March, 2022.

**Priority 6: Facilities and Infrastructure**

**Vision Statement:** Support employees and services through modern and safe facilities, current technology, and data security.

## Priority Goals:

1. Evaluate the plan around Information Technologies and the support contract for the agency.
  - a. Conduct a staff survey by August, 2021.
  - b. Evaluate the existing contract and possibly of hiring an internal IT staff by March, 2022.
2. Enhance agency-wide signage/branding for consistency and a welcoming environment.
  - a. Utilize the existing grant dollars (Granger Foundation), form a task group, put out RFPs to begin work in October, 2021.
3. Address overall long term viability of the Jackson, Hillsdale and Lansing offices.
  - a. Conduct an assessment over the winter of 2021, and propose recommendations on each office to impact the 2022 budget year (May 1, 2022)
4. Develop 5 year improvement plan for campus.
  - a. Work with Bergmann & Associates to update the campus map by September, 2021.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the input provided in this process from our employees, community, and the children and families we serve. Highfields' Senior Leadership and Board of Directors contributed extensively to this plan.

We thank Spectrum Consulting Group, Inc for facilitating and guiding this process.

Formally reviewed/adopted by the Highfields Board of Directors

February, 2021 First revision

June, 2021, Second Revision

August, 2021, Third Revision