



Strategic Plan 2019 - 2021

Executive Summary

DECEMBER 2018

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For almost 60 years, the dedicated staff of the Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) have been assisting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families on Long Island. We have grown and evolved since our founding, and we are constantly challenging ourselves on how we can improve the delivery of our mission to help children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities experience growth and fulfillment.

Three years ago, the DDI Board initiated a strategic planning process that led to a comprehensive review of all our programs with the goal of developing a Strategic Plan that would guide our decision making and ensure we remained focused on meeting the needs of all the individuals we serve. The plan was published in the fall of 2016 and was intended to cover the years 2017-2019, and we knew even then that the plan would need to be nimble and responsive to the ever-changing environment in which we operate.

The DDI Board, in partnership with the DDI Management Team, began the process of reviewing that Strategic Plan to look beyond 2019. We reviewed our progress against the existing plan, discussed changes in the environment since 2016 and committed to being more inclusive by seeking input from a broader range of DDI stakeholders, such as families, the people we serve, staff and several of the external agencies and organizations we work with, including the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), local school districts and the NYS Department of Education.

The result is the updated DDI Strategic Plan, covering the years 2019-2021. This updated plan continues to ensure we fulfill our mission, taking advantage of new opportunities and positioning our agency to meet challenges arising from increasing demand for services while acknowledging a finite amount of financial resources from the governmental agencies we depend on to fund our programs.

With the refresh of our Strategic Plan, DDI is re-committing to our long-held mission of helping people of all ages with autism and other developmental disabilities to live more fulfilling lives.

Sincerely,

John Lessard
Executive Director

Phil Veneziano
Chairperson,
On Behalf of the Board of Directors

DDI Overview

Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) was founded in 1961 to provide therapeutic intervention and address the special education needs of children with autism¹ and other developmental disabilities. Today, DDI is a dynamic, non-profit, multi-site agency, each day serving hundreds of children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities, providing educational, residential, habilitative, vocational, transportation and other supports to the Long Island community.

DDI's educational, residential, day and vocational supports are as diverse as the people we serve. Through nearly 60 years of sustained effort, DDI has grown substantially. Today, we are the leading provider of services and programs for children and adults with autism on Long Island, and we are acknowledged by the State and among our peers for our expertise in supporting both children and adults with complex and challenging behaviors.

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 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 July 2018)

We employ a dedicated staff of approximately 1,900 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	49
Preschool (3yrs.-5 yrs.)	Children ages 3 through 5 years have access to a continuum of services 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	392
School Age (5yrs.-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	245
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	Residential opportunities for adults with special needs beyond those that can be managed by their families have been developed across Long Island. 33 locations plus 3 more to open in 2019	192
Adult Day Program (including vocational programs)	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. 8 service sites plus over 50 participating employers	515
Transportation Services	Transporting people receiving services at non-DDI locations or working at local businesses.	100
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.	31
Respite Services	Center-based at 5 DDI locations for eligible families of children and adults.	120

The Strategic Planning Process

The Board of Directors recognizes the critical role of strategic planning in the agency's success and the importance of a disciplined approach. In order to ensure its value, the Board committed to a systematic approach to communicating, tracking, reviewing and updating the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan. In the spring of 2018, the Strategic Planning Committee was asked to revisit the document and to propose a Strategic Plan 2019-2021 for the Board to adopt.

The Strategic Planning Committee identified that soliciting the input of more internal and external stakeholders would bring value to the process. Stakeholders were identified and an outreach plan was created for management to execute over the course of approximately eight weeks during the summer of 2018. The committee also sought updates on the current strategic goals and objectives from the Board committees charged with oversight of each area of focus in the plan, referred to as 'Pillars' in the plan. The Senior Management Team updated the environmental assessments.

Input from all of the stakeholders, the environmental assessments and knowledge of progress made on the 2017-2019 goals and objectives all informed proposed adjustments to the plan, which were considered and discussed by the Strategic Planning Committee. It was agreed that the current Pillars would be continued in the 2019-2021 plan:

1. **Workforce** – Employees feel valued, supported and engaged, helping to make DDI the preferred agency within its field.
2. **Program Excellence** - DDI will meet the emerging needs of the people we serve with fiscally viable, effective and innovative supports and services.
3. **Information Technology** - DDI will have a secure and reliable technology infrastructure to enable employees to work more efficiently and to enhance the supports and services we provide to our students and adults.
4. **Facilities & Environments** – The people we serve and employees are provided with welcoming, well-maintained, safe and energy-efficient spaces.
5. **Fundraising** - DDI will have a sustainable process that ensures the availability of financial resources to meet its unfunded program or business needs and aspirations.
6. **Public Image & Communications** - DDI will differentiate itself from other providers in the eyes of all stakeholders in ways that reinforce its commitment to the values of Integrity, Dignity, Compassion and Teamwork.

Goals and objectives for each Pillar in this plan were updated and reviewed and approved by the agency's Board of Directors.

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.

Some of the key assumptions that have been identified are:

Demand for services – The overall demand for adult and children’s services will continue to increase for the foreseeable future, as evidenced by the reported increasing incidence of autism spectrum disorders.

Population served – The trend toward greater behavioral complexities accompanied by psychiatric comorbidities in children and adults served will continue.

Regulations – State and Federal guidelines emphasizing less restrictive environments in special education, day and residential settings is an important driver of ongoing program development.

Information technology – Innovations in the area of information technology offer opportunities to re-design service delivery and work processes.

Financial investment – New operating expenses, facilities and information technology will drive a need for new funding.

Managed care – Transition to outcomes-driven reimbursement will continue to evolve as it has in other parts of the healthcare industry.

Pool of workers – The pool of workforce candidates upon which DDI relies for its entry-level positions is becoming increasingly competitive due to multiple factors, including low unemployment and a regulatory environment that makes it challenging to work in the field.

Salaries – Insufficient public funding for our services adversely affects our ability to pay salaries that are competitive.

Minimum wage, compression and exempt overtime rules – Recent regulations affecting employer pay responsibilities are putting added salary cost pressures on us without adequate reimbursement relief.

Unfunded regulatory mandates – New regulations without associated funding to cover costs will continue.

Revenue – Special education, residential and day program services reimbursement will likely not keep pace with the rate of inflation.

Security concerns – Protecting the safety of the individuals we support and our workforce will become an increased focus, as it will for all organizations.