

RECOGNIZING ABILITIES, CREATING OPPORTUNITIES



REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Strategic Plan 2015-2017



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

Executive Summary

As a result of the national and a local economic crisis, Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (AZRSA) functioned in a challenging environment over the last several years. This environment led to an inability to effectively serve clients and cultivated an agency approach which led to personnel feeling less than valued, trusted and appreciated. Combined, these factors resulted in a poor perception of the agency in the community which further heightened the challenges of AZRSA.

AZRSA intends for this strategic plan to be a living document which will be used to guide management and staff. The plan is organized around three goals and seven objectives. These goals and objectives touch each of the three pillars of the organization – Staff, Clients, and Community. This ambitious endeavor will be monitored by the Strategic Plan Task Force on a quarterly basis. The completion of initial actions will help to build a forward momentum which will continue to build and ultimately result in an agency which has noticeably improved in its efforts to deliver quality services, demonstrate a commitment to staff, and be a respected community partner.

Acknowledgement

An endeavor of this magnitude could not have been successful without the encouragement, support and advice of many individuals who are passionate about this work. Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration would like to take a moment to express our thanks and appreciation to those who assisted in completing this project.

Our deepest gratitude is extended to Mr. Chaz Compton, Project Director TACE IX, Interwork Institute of San Diego State University. Mr. Compton provided invaluable guidance and input throughout the strategic planning process. As a constant source of knowledge and motivation, Mr. Compton led staff through the key steps necessary to develop the 2015-2017 AZRSA Strategic Plan.

We are tremendously grateful to our staff members. Without input and recommendations throughout the various stages of this project, the Strategic Plan Task Force would not have been able to move forward in the development of a strategic plan. The work conducted on a daily basis with the individuals we serve is the inspiration for continued improvements.

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Methodology

As a result of the national and a local economic crisis, the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (AZRSA) has functioned in a challenging environment throughout the last several years—one that led to an inability to serve many eligible clients. Additionally, there existed an agency culture where personnel felt less than valued or trusted. The Administration experienced turnover and poor personnel engagement. These factors also led to poor perception in the community, which further heightened the challenges faced by AZRSA. Upon assuming her position as Administrator of AZRSA in 2013, Letitia Labrecque saw value in developing a viable strategic plan. Feeling confident in a cohesive, energetic, and motivated management team, she formed a core task force of 16 individuals to facilitate the strategic planning process.

To begin the process of developing a strategic plan, the Administration solicited advice from the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) center. *(The TACE for Arizona's region is based at San Diego State University and provides technical assistance to vocational rehabilitation agencies).* A facilitator with experience in leading agencies through the strategic planning process was provided to AZRSA from the regional Technical Assistance and Continuing Education center.

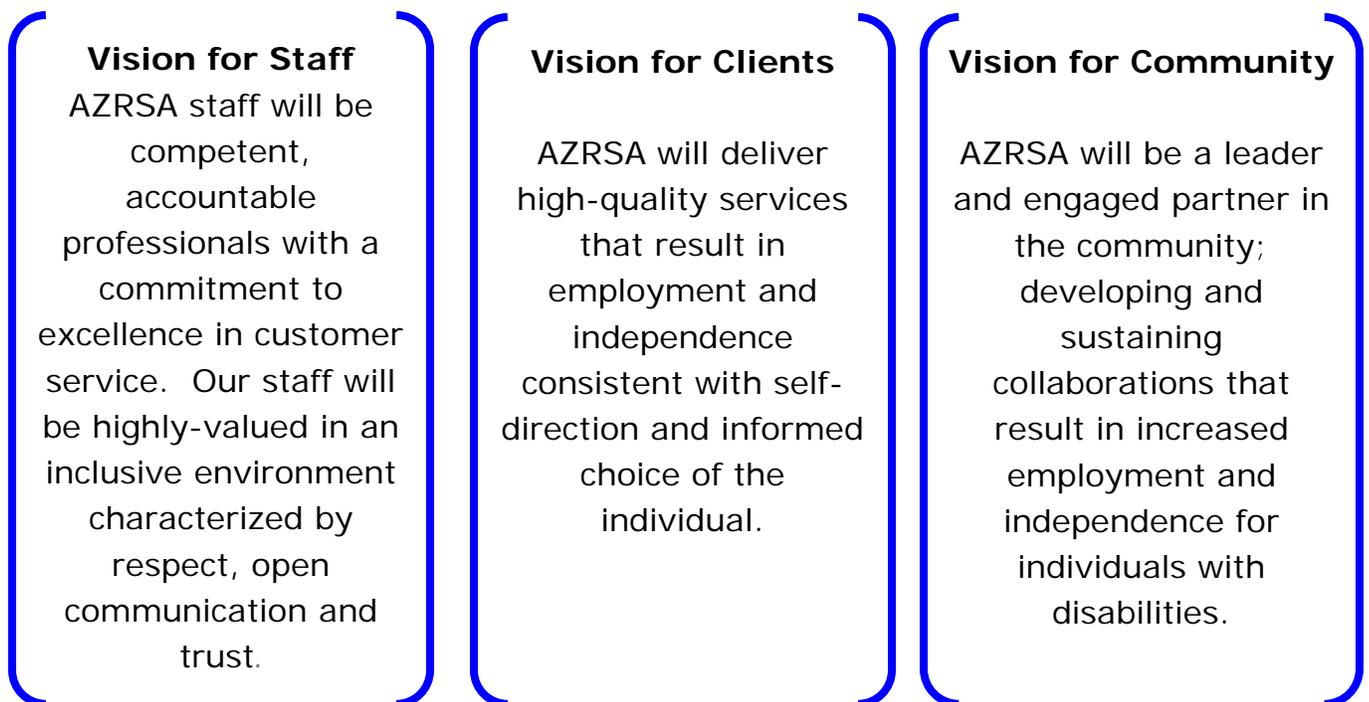
Throughout a series of meetings held in October and November 2013, the Strategic Plan Task Force applied the Bryson Model for strategic plan development as a guide. The Task Force worked to refine the existing mission of the agency.

*Arizona Rehabilitation Services
Administration works with individuals with
disabilities to achieve their goals for
employment and independence.*

Core values were identified for staff, clients and the community to guide interactions.



Building upon these values, specific vision statements for staff, clients and community were developed to guide Administration practices.



The updated mission, newly defined values and vision statements provided a solid foundation to begin the strategic planning process.

The workgroup recognized an integral part of this process would be to share information and solicit honest feedback from all AZRSA staff. In order to

ensure a consistent message was delivered statewide, an ad hoc team of three individuals from the Task Force met to develop a script and documents to be used by all teams to gather feedback from staff. Training was provided to the Task Force which outlined a general

method for leading the discussions and gathering information at each of the sites visited. The motto for these site visits was "Everyone has a Voice."

To begin the information gathering process, two statewide kick-off videoconference meetings were planned for February 2014. Each staff member was encouraged to attend. Ms. Labrecque led the meeting acknowledging the agency's challenges and inviting all staff to participate in the process of identifying opportunities for positive change. The process for soliciting information was shared with all staff who attended the videoconferences.

In order to successfully meet with staff statewide, the strategic planning workgroup was divided into eight Task Force Teams. Each team was given five to seven office assignments. Throughout the month of March and early April 2014, the Task Force Teams visited 45 different offices and units throughout the state to solicit input from all available employees.

During the site visits everyone, including the facilitators, was encouraged to set aside roles and engage in the process as an individual committed to

improving AZRSA. After reviewing the mission, values, and vision statements, participants were led by the facilitators through a series of activities. The activities were designed to elicit information about

"What Has to Change?"
"what has to change" for the agency to meet the desired outcomes and "how do we do that" in order to accomplish those desired outcomes.

"How Do We Do That?"

As the information was being combined into a single document common themes began to emerge. While there was some considerable overlap, data was able to be categorized into 13 major themes.



The compiled document was sent to all AZRSA staff for review. This document also served as the main source of information for the Task Force as it proceeded to develop goals, objectives and action steps to address the opportunities for improvement.

The Task Force convened to review and further catalog items identified by staff into the three categories: staff, client or community. Staff comments were placed into multiple categories as appropriate. The larger Task Force was divided into three committees and asked to focus its efforts on developing goals, objectives, and action steps to address staff comments assigned to their specific category. The Task Force then reconvened as a whole to prioritize the goals, objectives and action steps into a single cohesive three-year strategic plan. This living document recognizing the three pillars of staff, client, and community will be used to guide the work of AZRSA through the next three years in living out the mission and achieving the visions set for the Administration.

Goal 1 - AZRSA staff will be valued as accountable professionals.

Objective	Actions
<p>Objective 1</p> <p>AZRSA will create an inclusive environment and culture where staff are supported and valued.</p>	<p>Action 1.1 AZRSA Administration will advocate for equitable salary adjustments and other financial incentives whenever possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the possibility of utilizing a counselor tier system • Explore salary adjustments for staff who meet qualified staff standards <p>Action 1.2 Provide the necessary tools and equipment in order to improve staff function.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to update and advocate for all systems to be accessible • Investigating and implementing the use of WebEx, GoToMeetings, and videoconferencing capabilities • Updating and maintaining a report of equipment inventory • Posting guidelines for requesting equipment and facility needs <p>Action 1.3 Celebrate and reward staff for outstanding performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Recognition for Individuals Demonstrating Excellence (PRIDE) • Developing mechanisms for recognizing success outside of successful employment outcomes • Planning unit/office/regional/state events • Receiving “credit” for getting clients job-ready • Developing opportunities for alternative work schedules (telecommuting, virtual, mobile)

	<p>Action 1.4 Strive to expand the recruitment process, fill vacancies and build or enhance programs with highly qualified personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating a process review tool to find candidates with desired qualifications • Developing a national and local recruitment process • Investigating alternative methods of interviewing such as using behavioral questions and technical skills assessments • Establishing a service or contract coordinator function or position • Hiring a Contracts Specialist for each region • Hiring a Marketing Coordinator • Continuing to develop AT staff • Exploring the concept of utilizing a “floating” pool of qualified staff to assist with vacant caseloads
<p>Objective 2</p> <p>Communication to and among staff will be clear, consistent, and empowering.</p>	<p>Action 2.1 Develop a standard of communication which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely updates on Libera, policy, procedure, or administrative changes • Posting agendas and meeting notes on the intranet for staff to view • Provide guidelines for grammar standards of written language • Provide standards for appropriate use of internet, intranet, and email • Clarify when communication is policy based and empower staff to exercise professional judgment; and • Provide information on ways to handle internal and external customers

<p>Objective 3</p> <p>AZRSA will invest in the development of our staff through training and mentoring.</p>	<p>Action 3.1 Develop a comprehensive on-boarding and training process for new staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly meet and greet of Central Office staff • AZRSA Handbook for new employees • Code of Conduct for employees • Step-by-step process for supervisors on new hire process <p>Action 3.2 Develop initial and on-going training, mentoring, and professional development opportunities for all staff positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve internal training opportunities • Develop a process for identifying and providing external training • Explore additional funding opportunities for the provision of training • Develop an annual CBT for navigating the policy manual • Develop AZRSA Employee Communication Opportunity (ECO) form and process • Develop a training for staff to understand contract documents <p>Action 3.3 Provide on-going Libera training and mentoring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstate the Libera Users group <p>Action 3.4 Develop a mentoring program for all direct staff.</p>
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Goal 2 - AZRSA will deliver high quality services to persons with disabilities.

Objective	Actions
<p>Objective 1 AZRSA will implement efficient and effective processes that contribute to timely service provision and staff accountability.</p>	<p>Action 1.1 Evaluate eligibility, significance of disability and Individualized Plan for Employment processes to identify and implement changes that will contribute to meeting established timeframes.</p> <p>Action 1.2 Explore ways to streamline electronic and paperwork processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libera processes • Develop a mechanism for storing and accessing programmatic documents • Change and update forms to reduce redundancy • Reduce sign-off requirements • Review Records Request process • Avoid duplication on forms <p>Action 1.3 Develop a policy manual for all AZRSA programs.</p> <p>Action 1.4 Develop and implement strategies that contribute to successful employment outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track job-ready clients • Job Clubs in offices • Employment Specialists – internal/external • Internships, On the Job Training, Customized Employment Training, Supported Employment • Utilize Talent Acquisition Pool <p>Action 1.5 Explore opportunities to improve procurement processes.</p> <p>Action 1.6 Formalize and implement a standard process for case transfers.</p>

<p>Objective 2 AZRSA will improve on the delivery of customer service.</p>	<p>Action 2.1 Establish standards of communication with clients that are clear and consistent and reflect client accountability toward achieving employment.</p> <p>Action 2.2 AZRSA will identify and implement program redesign strategies as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IPE development workshop with clients that are facilitated by AZRSA staff• Pilot the team delivery concept• Pilot eligibility unit• Develop and implement internal employment specialist working with local offices• Job skills to be taught in the VR offices by staff <p>Action 2.3 Train staff to ensure informed choice and accountability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update forms and program language to encourage client accountability
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Goal 3 - AZRSA will be a leader and respected partner in the community.

Objective	Action
<p>Objective 1 Increase the quality and quantity of vendor services.</p>	<p>Action 3.1 Clearly and consistently communicate quality standards and expectations to vendors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide in-house forums for current vendors • Develop a vendor page of the AZRSA website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information re: upcoming RFP's ○ How to register in ProcureAZ <p>Action 3.2 In collaboration with State Rehabilitation Council, conduct a vendor and staff needs assessment with an emphasis on service needs in traditionally underserved areas and develop strategies to meet the identified needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct targeted outreach for needed service providers <p>Action 3.3 Develop and utilize a vendor report card to increase informed choice for individuals served and for quality assurance.</p> <p>Action 3.4 Provide training to vendors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow vendors to participate in AZRSA trainings • Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) training • Develop training for vendors on how to read contract documents • On-going meetings and forums • How to read an authorization and provide service according to authorization

Objective 2: AZRSA will improve marketing and develop additional outreach opportunities.

Action 2.1 Identify community agencies and programs for outreach and establish new and varied liaison relationships.

Action 2.2 Collaborate with community organizations to increase awareness of AZRSA and advance the mission of the organization.

Action 2.3 Develop and implement a marketing plan, utilizing multiple methods of communication.

Action 2.4 Embrace the dual customer approach and partner with business to meet their training, recruitment, hiring, accommodation and retention needs regarding the employment of persons with disabilities.

Action 2.5 Provide training to community partners on AZRSA services and processes and engage in cross-training opportunities.

Action 2.6 Ensure AZRSA representation on local Workforce Investment Boards.

Action 2.7 Recognize and celebrate community partners that provide exemplary service to persons with disabilities.

Evaluation

The Administrator and Deputy Administrators of AZRSA will act as Goal Leaders to monitor progress on each objective and completion of corresponding action steps. A Project Lead and Co-Lead has been assigned to each objective. These individuals will be responsible for coordinating committees to work on completing the assigned actions.

Action plans will consist of the following information:

- Specific actions necessary for each of the identified objectives
- Any additional staff and resources which may be required to complete the actions
- Anticipated timeline for completion
- A measurable description of anticipated outcome

Action plans for each project will be posted on the intranet and internet sites for viewing. Project Leads will be responsible for reporting progress to the Task Force and updating the action plans on a monthly basis. Quarterly, a summary of progress for each committee will be posted.

Each action has been tentatively designated to begin at various points throughout the three-year cycle. The chart below is a quarterly representation of anticipated action completion.

This multi-layered approach to review and report out will assist in guiding discussions about any potential opportunities for change, as well as allow the team to celebrate the successes.

	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Staff Objective 1												
Action 1.1												
Action 1.2												
Action 1.3												
Action 1.4												
Staff Objective 2												
Action 2.1												
Staff Objective 3												
Action 3.1												
Action 3.2												
Action 3.3												
Action 3.4												
Client Objective 1												
Action 1.1												
Action 1.2												
Action 1.3												
Action 1.4												
Action 1.5												
Action 1.6												
Client Objective 2												
Action 2.1												
Action 2.2												
Action 2.3												
Community Objective 1												
Action 1.1												
Action 1.2												
Action 1.3												
Action 1.4												
Community Objective 2												
Action 2.1												
Action 2.2												
Action 2.3												
Action 2.4												
Action 2.5												
Action 2.6												
Action 2.7												

Summary

Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration, with the input of many, has developed a three year strategic plan. Although presented separately, the objectives and associated action steps are clearly interrelated. The successful achievement of one objective can impact the success of others; addressing actions of one objective can concurrently impact the actions of another objective. This strategic plan document, recognizing the three pillars of staff, client and community, will be used to guide the work of AZRSA through the next three years in living out the mission and achieving the visions set for the Administration.

Mission

The Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (AZRSA) works with persons with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment and independence.

Visions

Working with Staff

AZRSA staff will be competent, accountable professionals with a commitment to excellence in customer service. Our staff will be highly-valued in an inclusive environment characterized by respect, open communication and trust.

Working with Clients

AZRSA will deliver high-quality services that result in employment and independence consistent with self-direction and informed choice of the individual.

Working with Community

AZRSA will be a leader and engaged partner in the community; developing and sustaining collaborations that result in increased employment and independence for individuals with disabilities.

RSA Strategic Plan 2015-2017

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