

Imagine Strategic Plan

About Imagine

Imagine Supported Living Services (Imagine) operates with the mission to empower individuals with developmental disabilities through service and advocacy. Since its founding, Imagine has been committed to quality, defined individually for each person we serve. We recognize and act on the connection between achievements in our clients' homes and the change we foster in the community towards an inclusive and welcoming culture. We pay attention to our sustainability as an organization.

Our core activities include Supported Living Services (SLS), which builds intensive and comprehensive services around each individual, and a Family Home Agency (FHA) which uses a family-centered model to provide individuals with stability and connection to the community they live in. The statewide Self-Determination Program (SDP) is in the process of launching at the end of 2018. Imagine has provided leadership to its development and intends to provide services through that program. Collectively, individualized services account for more than 90% of Imagine's expenses and staff time.

Imagine also provides programs meant to improve systems and communities for people with developmental disabilities. Such programs include our film festival, Person-Centered Services Incubator (PCSI), and Self-Determination Learning Community. Additionally, we are committed to strong support roles in collaborative initiatives with partners including Shared Adventures' Day on The Beach, The Gathering of Extraordinary People, and others. Community- and systemwide programs are much smaller than the individualized programs and often have little or no outside funding.

Imagine's lifetime commitment to those we serve also requires self-care. Imagine has experienced a financial surplus in all but three of our 16 years, and two of the deficit years were planned for investment purposes. The last four years have seen Imagine nearly double in size and budget. Imagine owns our office complex and receives grants and donations providing about 2% of our revenues.

Imagine is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization based and operating in Santa Cruz County, California.

Our six Core Values are:

- Empowerment
- Outstanding Service
- Fabric of The Community
- Employer of Choice
- Safety and Security
- Lifelong Learning and Innovation

Summary of this Strategic Plan

“Empower individuals with developmental disabilities through service and advocacy”

This plan outlines three years of incremental change to be executed between October 2018 and September 2021. In last strategic planning cycle (four years), Imagine nearly doubled in size and budget. We made a significant investment in our own office building to stabilize costs for office and community space. As contrasted to the more rapid growth of the last four years, we expect to experience more modest growth over the next three years. Our focus is strengthening our organization and its implementation of core our values. We want to ensure that quality and continuous improvement guide Imagine’s services and organizational culture.

As a result, the majority of goals are aimed at continued quality in how we deliver services, our impact on the community, and the inclusiveness of our culture:

1. **Person-Centered Thinking Everywhere:** These goals reinforce the use of person-centered thinking and elements from Essential Lifestyle Planning (see below for description) to ensure that the client is first in strong individualized services. A full partnership with the client’s circle of support (e.g. family members, friends, other agencies) can result in continuity of services through all life stages.
2. **Clients and Community:** These goals support Imagine’s value of “Fabric of the Community” by enabling and encouraging client participation in the community. It also continues Imagines role as an influencer of a society that is inclusive and welcoming of our clients.
3. **Organizational Culture:** These goals recognize that Imagine, like any organization, does best for their clients when there is a healthy work environment that is respectful and inclusive.
4. **Training the Organization:** These goals support Imagine’s value of “Lifelong Learning and Innovation” with more formal approaches to training including inclusion of person-centered thinking vocabulary and tools, expanded topics, and professional development planning in employee performance reviews.

We also identified several areas of potential risk to our long-term sustainability and included these as a final set of goals:

5. **Planning for Long Term Financial Viability** These goals recognize key risks to Imagine’s financial viability: escalating housing costs, potential funding or service changes from the state, and a need for financial reserves, both operational and in an endowment.

We expect an early accomplishment to be the formation of an ad-hoc strategic planning committee responsible for reviewing progress and reporting out on same. This committee or representatives thereof will provide periodic status reports both to the board and to our stakeholders. Unforeseen changes in our environment also need to be addressed. This committee will also be charged with an annual review, and identifying modifications or amendments as appropriate at that time.

Person-Centered Thinking and Essential Lifestyle Planning

This strategic plan makes multiple references to “person-centered thinking” (PCT) which is a foundational element of “Essential Lifestyle Planning” (ELP). ELP is a process for learning how someone wants to live and for developing a plan to help make it happen. Using ELP/PCT tools and methods, Imagine can develop and implement services that are better focused on and adapted to the strengths, needs, goals, and challenges of individuals served. Full implementation of ELP/PCT would exhaust Imagine’s resources; this strategic plan is focused on identifying and using tools and methods of most value in delivering individualized services.

“The Learning Community,” led by Michael Smull, Helen Sanderson, and others developed and validated the tools and methods included in ELP/PCT through an open source process over more than two decades. For more information on ELP/PCT, please see “The Learning Community” (<http://tlcpcp.com/>).

Imagine's commitment to Person-Centered Thinking/Essential Lifestyle Planning (PCT/ELP) moves our own mission and values forward and also helps maintain our compliance with federal guidelines under the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver. The HCBS waiver provides nearly half the funding of our system.

Strategic Issues and Purposes

1. Person-Centered Thinking Everywhere

Imagine’s mission is “Empower people with developmental disabilities through service and advocacy.” Key to fulfilling this mission is person-centered thinking as embodied in Essential Lifestyle Planning (ELP) which puts clients first. We expect all Imagine staff to put the client first in service delivery and decision making. We recognize that Essential Lifestyle Planning relies on the knowledge and participation of a client’s circle of support as well as Imagine.

1.1 Adopt vocabulary and subset of tools from Essential Lifestyle Planning (ELP) to incorporate into client-focused training, planning and practice.

1.2 Use house meetings to review and strategize approaches to individualized client goals as well as general training topics.

Imagine intends to be of service to clients throughout all stages of life and to strengthen our role in planning for their futures. Most clients, but not all, have a “circle of support” who are critical in day-to-day service delivery, crises, and periodic planning for difficult life events. Imagine considers these stakeholders to be honest partners with whom we can develop mutual expectations that are periodically reviewed.

1.3 Regularly engage stakeholders from the client’s circle of support in planning for the future. Utilize a toolkit to prompt discussion and planning for difficult life events (e.g. critical illness or death) or continuity (e.g. succession conservators, financial considerations).

1.4 Review and modify as needed Imagine’s individualized approach and protocols related to client crises and emergencies. Ensure that individual client/house plans are up-to-date and that teams are regularly trained for readiness.

2. Clients and Community

One of Imagine's values is "Fabric of the Community." We have a history of leadership in the community serving those with developmental disabilities. Imagine clients have choices in how they participate in the community and create their connections to others.

Imagine can encourage and enable participation in activities and communities of choice.

2.1 Leverage the activities of a client to engage with other clients (dinners, music, e.g.). Encourage invitation of others served by Imagine to events centered around individuals.

We work to influence society towards inclusivity and welcoming of our clients. There is an ongoing need to promote inclusiveness, even in the welcoming community of broader Santa Cruz. Those in the intellectual/developmental disability community and their interests can and should influence policy development.

2.2 Continue the practice of being part of a community that serves others. Maintain and develop partnerships that create opportunities for volunteerism for clients and staff.

2.3 Continue advocacy role in local and state-level policy development, including state budget hearings, Department of Developmental Services and Health and Human Services Agency workgroups, and Regional Center committees.

2.4 Continue consultations to the community agencies, especially those addressing the needs of the underserved, including Person Centered Services Incubator program either formally with funding or informally without.

2.5 Expand events available to the people we serve beyond the current inclusive events and parties (holiday parties, Gathering of Extraordinary People, Film Festival).

3. Organizational Culture

Imagine has adopted six Core Values which are integral to service delivery and to how we work together as an organization. Imagine commits to strengthening and maintaining a respectful and inclusive culture.

3.1 Develop and implement a plan focused on a respectful and inclusive culture/healthy work environment, including communications and related human resources processes.

3.2 Strengthen the board to improve efficiency, agility, and oversight.

4. Training the Organization (Lifelong Learning and Innovation)

Well-trained staff result in well-served clients, and training supports all six of our core values. Imagine values the professionals we employ—from direct care staff to the facilitators to the leadership team—and we prioritize investment in their training. We reinforce a person-centered thinking approach in our training.

4.1 Align training materials to person-centered thinking vocabulary and tools where appropriate.

We seek to continuously strengthen our collaboration skills. We recognize the partnerships that we can leverage to deliver training, including expanded and deepened topics.

4.2 Review and formalize organizational training curriculum for all levels of the organization. Expand topics such as management, communications, confidentiality, diversity, or other intra-organizational dynamics by January 2019

Our employees have potentially different paths through professional development.

4.3 Use the performance review process as an opportunity to engage staff in professional development planning in 2019 performance reviews.

5. Planning for Long Term Financial Viability

Imagine operates in an environment with future unknowns—housing costs, policy changes, and decreasing funding from existing sources—which can affect our financial health. With attention and planning in three areas, we intend to position ourselves to respond to some of the anticipated uncertainty and maintain long-term viability.

Housing costs are rising and they are a significant risk that must be addressed for our clients and staff.

5.1 Analyze known CA housing models for applicability to Santa Cruz County and plan to implement the best model

Self-Determination Services is a new service that matches Imagine’s strengths and has the potential to have a positive financial contribution.

5.2 Regularly report on Imagine's role in Self-Determination Services and its financial impact.

Unrestricted donations provide flexibility and are a small portion of the annual budget.

5.3 Scope, implement, and communicate an endowed fund as an expansion to fundraising options.

5.4 Develop and use board-approved communications tools for grants and other asks from interested parties.

Currently, Imagine operates with a small annual surplus which is derived through careful budgetary management. We know from experience and common sense that harder economic times are ahead. We know from history that systems change, and organizations that are unprepared enter preventable crises. We are committed to being a stable support for the people we serve throughout their lives. We need to include funding for future needs and unexpected events in our budget. Examples include mandatory minimum wage increases, specialized training for emerging support need, and the state of California reducing available funds.

5.5 Ongoing budgeting and fund management aimed at maintaining a reserve of one-month, minimum, with a goal of six months of funding in reserve.

5.6 Maintain attention to risk management with the goal of minimizing preventable risks to services while not needlessly encroaching on client choice and creativity.

Key Results

1. Person-Centered Thinking Everywhere

1.1 Adopt vocabulary and subset of tools from Essential Lifestyle Planning (ELP) to incorporate into client-focused training, planning, and practice.

Key results:

- All Senior Service Staff receive at minimum two-day course on Essential Lifestyle Planning/Person-Centered Thinking (ELP/PCT) within 6 months of hire. (Julie)
- Tools from ELP/PCT in use with each SLS client by June 2019. (Julie)
- Develop metrics to measure our success by June 2019 (Julie)

1.2 Use house meetings to review and strategize approaches to individualized client goals as well as general training topics.

Key results:

- Adopt house meeting agendas based on Person-Centered Thinking by June 2019. (Julie)
- Organize a committee by December 2018 to plan for June 2019 implementation. (Julie)

1.3 Regularly engage stakeholders from the client's circle of support in planning for the future. Utilize a toolkit to prompt discussion and planning for difficult life events (e.g. critical illness or death) or continuity (e.g. succession conservators, financial considerations).

Key results:

- Kick off committee to develop template for "handbook" by loved ones about the client by November 2018. (Janine)
- Work with key stakeholders, especially family members to develop metrics, key events which determine whether this is done and up-to-date by December 2019. (Janine)
- Develop a learning model approach that utilizes continuous improvement to recognize and respond to changes in each individual's health, purpose, behavior, and communication by October 2021 (Doug)
- Set frequency of updates and annual goals for learning model including tools for action, review, and correction that will be incorporated. Each annual goal will have a responsible party. Responsible party for first year assigned by October 2018. (Doug)

1.4 Review and modify Imagine's individualized approach and protocols related to client crises and emergencies as needed. Ensure that individual client/house plans are up-to-date and that teams are regularly trained for readiness.

Key results:

- Each client to have an emergency plan for fire, victimization, grief, natural disasters, and changes in health. These plans are to be reviewed and renewed annually. Director of Services to check that plans are current as of October 2019.

2. Clients and Community

2.1 Leverage the activities of a client to engage with other clients (dinners, music, e.g.). Encourage invitation of others served by Imagine to events centered around individuals.

Key results:

- Add to Direct Care job description and performance review events attended by the clients they support by January 2019. (Patty)
- Include social goals in person-centered plans beginning by January 2019
 - By March 2019, survey people we serve to determine causes that interest them. (Julie)
- Ask partners (agencies) for resources that support expanded activities and engagement by clients. This is an ongoing item. (Drea)
 - By June 2019, seek new partnerships appropriate to existing interest and community need. (Drea)

2.2 Continue with practice of being part of a community that serves others; the people we serve should serve others. (e.g. Human Race Volunteer, Homeless Garden) Maintain and develop partnerships that create opportunities for volunteerism for clients and staff.

Key results:

- Continue to be a partner with other agencies (Day on the Beach, Human Resources Brown Bag, Human Race) especially for events that promote the inclusion of people with disabilities and their neighbors. This is an ongoing item (Doug and Patty)
- In election years, seek volunteer roles for people we serve with the campaigns of politicians they support. (Julie)

2.3 Continue advocacy role in local and state-level policy development, including state budget hearings, Department of Developmental Services and Health and Human Services Agency workgroups, and Regional Center committees.

Key results:

- Include participants other than the Executive Director. One ongoing activity per year. This is an ongoing item. (Doug)

2.4 Continue consultations to the community agencies, especially those addressing the needs of the underserved, including Person Centered Services Incubator program either formally (with funding) or informally (without funding).

Key results:

- Develop a plan for when to charge for consulting services versus providing free mentoring. Formulate when to accept, decline, limit or require fees for consulting and mentoring by June 2019. (Doug and Will)

2.5 Expand events available to the people we serve, beyond the current inclusive events and parties. (Holiday Parties, Gathering, Film Festival)

Key results:

- Incrementally expand the number of Imagine-sponsored events and continue expanding until participation declines. Seek to have eight sponsored events in 2019. (Drea, Cherice & Lili)
- In preparing monthly calendar, check in with Shared Adventures, Wide Awakes (Easter Seals), Hope Church, and other agencies. (Lili)

3. Organizational Culture

3.1 Develop and implement a plan focused on a respectful and inclusive culture/healthy work environment, including communications and related human resource processes.

Key results:

- Meet with a consultant to develop a pathway consisting of surveys, training, and executive education, communication plans, etc. by March 2019. (Doug)

3.2 Strengthen the board to improve efficiency, agility, and oversight.

Key results:

- Create a Board Strategic Planning subcommittee to review progress and propose annual updates.
- Develop Board Workplan for Board Activities beyond meetings by April 2019 (Mark)
- By October 2018, board will complete a self-assessment of time available and areas of interest for the Strategic Plan.
- By October 2018, complete a Calendar of annual Board activities and responsibilities. (Lili)
- Move to bimonthly board meetings. (Mark)
- Consider optimum size of the board, taking into account the size of the organization, workload, and need for volunteer responsibilities by June 2019 (Mark)

4. Training the Organization (Lifelong Learning and Innovation)

4.1 Align training material to person-centered thinking (PCT) vocabulary and tools where appropriate.

Key results:

- Revise onboarding and orientation materials to include person-centered thinking vocabulary and tools by June 2019. (Julie)
- Human Resources to receive Essential Lifestyle Planning /Person Centered Thinking training by February 2019 (Doug)

4.2 Review and formalize organizational training curriculum for all levels of the organization. Expand into topics such as management, communications, confidentiality, diversity, and other intra-organizational dynamics by January 2019.

Key results:

- Regular training requirements for Direct Care Staff through All-Staff meetings and house meetings to be certified by Director of Services and included on performance reviews by January 15, 2019. (Julie)
- By March 2019, develop a budget for trainings that supports where, how and to whom resources will be allocated for training and education. (Doug)
- Identify and take advantage of the opportunities to use outside resources for training and/or certification. This is an ongoing item. (Patty)
- Training and education plan with support for all leadership team members by September 2019. (Patty)
- Beginning January 2019, each All-Staff and House Meeting to include a training element. Expectation that staff attend trainings and community. (Julie)
- Plan calendar year trainings in advance with ad hoc months for House Meetings by December 2018. (Patty for All-Staff, Julie responsible for House Meetings)
- Develop a plan/system for cross-training by October, 2019 (Doug)

4.3 Use the performance review process as an opportunity to engage staff in professional development planning in 2019 performance reviews.

Key results:

- By September 2019, create a professional development conversation process as part of formalizing the direct care performance review process.(Julie)
- By December 2019, ensure professional development feedback is considered in planning 2020 group trainings. (Patty - All Staff, Julie - House Meetings)

5. Planning for Long Term Financial Viability

5.1 Analyze known CA housing models for applicability to Santa Cruz County and plan to implement the best model

Key results:

- By October 2018: examine the Coalition for Housing Accessibility, Needs, Choices & Equity, Inc (CHANCE Santa Barbara) housing model (Doug)
- By March 2019: examine Housing Choices Coalition, others. (Doug)
- Presentation to the Board by April 2019 (Doug)

5.2 Regularly report on Imagine's role in Self-Determination Services and its financial impact.

Key results:

- Develop plans related to cost and content of Self-Determination services based on sustainability and the developing market by September, 2019. (Doug)

5.3 Scope, implement and communicate an endowed fund as an addition to fundraising options.

Key results:

- By June 2019, know the process required to establish an endowment and understand feasibility. (Doug)
- By October 2019, develop proposal for endowment, including philosophy, rules, and communications strategy for initial funding campaign. (Doug)

5.4 Develop and use board-approved communications tools for grants and other asks from interested parties.

Key results:

- By February 2019, Fundraising and Development Committee of the board to present a project plan to establish website update, style guides, pitch decks, and grant-seeking priorities. (Janine)

5.5 Ongoing budgeting and fund management to maintain a reserve of one-month in reserves, and a goal of six months in reserves.

Key results:

- Identify appropriate investment strategy for reserves by April 2019 (Doug)
- Future budgets proposed beginning with the 2019-2020 fiscal year (April 2019) will include the following information (Doug):
 - What is the projected surplus to be placed in reserve
 - How many weeks of need at the budgeted level does that amount represent
 - How many months of need are on-hand in the reserve account
 - A projection of how long, at the current rate of saving and growth, it will take until Imagine has 6 months of need in available reserves

5.6 Maintain attention to risk management with the goal of minimizing preventable risks to services while not needlessly encroaching on client choice and creativity.

Key results: TBD (Will)

Legend:

Board Ownership with staff support

Staff Ownership

Hybrid Ownership with staff support

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