Who are We?

Volunteers of America is a church without walls. Since 1896, we have answered God’s call to transform lives by reaching and uplifting America’s most vulnerable.
As we move into the next decade, 2020, we anticipate systemic changes in key areas affecting Volunteers of America’s services, particularly services we provide to people with intellectual disabilities. Other coming changes may impact our services to veterans and the provision of health-related services. Our strategic planning will help us be ready for the future and perhaps be a launching pad for a new plan to effectively deal with change.

Change can be good! How we embrace and manage change will make all the difference. The key to effectiveness for a person or non-profit is to be flexible and nimble. Our core values and mission will stay the same, and our respect for one another will be paramount, but the way we fulfill our mission will change.

Our strategic planning process has spanned more than six months and involved Board members, employees, persons served, and community stakeholders. We have received input through one-on-one conversations, focus groups, satisfaction surveys, and exit interviews.

We identified five areas that are critical to the next three years at VOA Southeast ... improved messaging and communication, improved employee recruitment and retention, quality service provision, program and services growth and expansion, and ministry development.

We are establishing groups to delve deeper into each of these areas and to bring recommendations forward. Together, we will work our strategic plan and make changes as needed, incorporating the plan into all unit objectives and adapting to change as we learn to be flexible.

Thank you for your support, your input, and your guidance.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Williams        Wallace T. Davis
Chair                  President and CEO
Branding: We are always looking to make new friends and to build relationships with people who can further our mission. Our new ministry building in Mobile has been instrumental in this effort. We have hosted a number of events that have brought the community through our doors. Seminars about moral injury, addictions, and veteran services are just some of the ways we have expanded our network.

Programs & Services: Over the last few years, we have grown our services to the intellectually disabled in Georgia and have recently been approved to expand these services into Mississippi. We have also expanded our services to veterans in Georgia and are actively applying for new opportunities to serve veterans in Alabama. Our most significant addition is the Helping Families Initiative program that works with the Alabama public school system to address truancy and family unification. This program has been a tremendous success.

Ministry: We have two faith communities meeting at Hillcrest each week. The Church at Hillcrest provides opportunities for families with disabled children to worship together while Hope of the Nations is a multi-lingual faith community. New Day Christian Ministries meets at Hope Chapel, located at Eagle’s Landing, our campus for homeless veterans. We also continue to work with many other churches in the community. We also offer Intentional Interim services to assist churches during the time between the leaving of one pastor and the calling of another.

Financial Strength: While the organization is financially strong with a solid balance sheet, the absence of funding increases, combined with the strong economy, has presented significant challenges. With national unemployment rates at historic lows, we are also part of the national crises in hiring direct support staff and other key positions.”

Innovation & Excellence: Although we are not dually accredited, we have maintained our CARF and CQL accreditations and have a strong quality assurance department. We seek to lead, as evidenced by our role in developing the first Alabama Service Providers Association for providers of services to people with intellectual disabilities.
Strategies

Improved Communication

Given our size, and that we are spread across three states, it can be a challenge to keep everyone on the same page. VOA Southeast will provide clear, informative, and up-to-date communication that reaches all employees, those we serve, and community stakeholders.

**Strategy:**
- Create a work group that periodically reviews our internal and external communications and makes suggestions for improvement.

Improved Employee Recruitment and Retention

Employees are the best asset we have and are vital to the fulfillment of our mission. VOA Southeast will continue to value and build on its employee base by retaining and recruiting like-minded people who believe in our mission and commitment to the provision of quality services.

**Strategy:**
- Strengthen our recruitment and on-boarding processes by making them more efficient and user-friendly.
- Increase our advocacy with funding sources and the state legislatures in an effort to improve our compensation and benefits package.
- Develop creative, non-financial, ways to recognize and reward our staff.

Quality Service Provision

VOA Southeast maintains either **CQL** or **CARF** accreditation in each of its primary program areas and strives to maintain the high standards that come with these accreditation bodies.

**Strategy:**
- Continue to be a premier provider of quality services.
- Enhance our internal training program for employees, including the exploration of new ways to utilize **Relias** software.
- Continue to value a strong quality assurance department.
Program and Services Growth and Expansion

The future is uncertain in regard to services to the intellectually disabled. While we expect to soon be providing new residential services in Mississippi, Alabama is heading in another direction that focuses on non-residential services. We must find and explore new opportunities. While we explore new opportunities, our existing, relevant services must be maintained while we grow.

**Strategy:**
- Grow our new Helping Families Initiative to reach every county in Alabama.
- Continue to develop affordable housing through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program.
- Develop services under the CMS Home and Community-Based Waiver program.

Development of our Ministry

There are many opportunities to minister to others! Our new worship center, chapel, and ministry center provide endless opportunities.

**Strategy:**
- Continue to provide support to the three faith communities that meet in our facilities.
- Continue to maintain our focus on the whole person, including their spiritual needs.
- Develop new relationships with community-based churches.
We would like to offer a special thanks to everyone who gave their time and input in developing this plan.

We received input from across the organization, and that has allowed us to develop a plan that positions us to better serve communities and people in need.

There are many ways to help meet needs in our communities. We strive to be adaptable in working with businesses, schools, civic organizations, and individuals to help us develop ways to meet our community’s needs.

For more information about Volunteers of America Southeast, please join our movement.

www.voase.org

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