

LANGLADE COUNTY

2021 - 2023 Strategic Plan



Introduction

At the beginning of 2020, the Langlade County Board deemed it appropriate and necessary to take the time to evaluate its past and more importantly, chart a course for the future. Moving forward, this would ensure that Langlade County's Mission and Values were updated, relevant and at the forefront of its operations. The county has gone through and experienced some significant changes over the past several years, environmental and cultural, that have caused the County Board to step back and reevaluate its strategic position and goals for the future. Mandated services are at the core of the county and providing those services in an excellent fashion is of great importance. In addition, Langlade County wants to drive innovation and economic development, welcoming businesses to locate and/or sustain themselves within the community. Partnering with the surrounding communities, Langlade County would like to welcome a younger workforce, blending laborers and entrepreneurs, diverse cultures and innovative ways of business thinking. Langlade County wants to also ensure that its public and communities are served and offered programs and opportunities that foster growth, education and family values, taking advantage of its natural resources and continuing to be a destination of choice for its communities and those visiting them. As a governmental organization, financial pressures are ever prevalent and therefore, being efficient with our resources is crucial to our success. This plan is intended to articulate the county board's vision for the future and to create alignment, clarity and focus across the business and within Langlade County's communities.

There was not a current Strategic plan in place, so the need to create a plan was evident. The strategic planning process was driven mainly by the board appointed Strategic Planning Committee with outside facilitation from the NorthCentral Technical College (NTC) Workforce Training and Professional Development Department. 50% of the cost was covered by an educational grant secured for Langlade County by NTC. The entire county board was kept apprised during the process with updates and progress reports during various county board meetings. County board members were also invited (and attended) steering committee sessions when able. Having a smaller steering committee enabled the process to be more efficient and focused, allowing this strategic plan to be completed more quickly.

Members of the Strategic Planning Committee included:

John Medo - County Board Vice Chair

Don Scupien - County Supervisor

Ron Barger - Health Department Director

Angela Close - Executive Director (LCED)

Pamela Resch - Finance Director

Robin Stowe - Counsel

Judy Nagel - County Clerk

Tim McKeough - NTC Outside Facilitator

AD HOC Members:

Ben Pierce - County Board Chair

Robert Benishek - County Board Member (District #1)

Elizabeth Gebert - District Attorney

The subsequent strategic plan has been thoughtfully created and evaluated by the entire board and steering committee. All involved agree that the strategies laid out, best position Langlade County to successfully fulfill its mission. This plan is a living document and will be reviewed periodically throughout its three-year cycle and updated on an annual basis or as deemed necessary.

Mission Statement

The mission statement was updated during the strategic planning process and now reads:

The primary mission of Langlade County Government is to provide essential services in a fiscally responsible manner that protects and promotes the health, safety, economic well-being, and environmental stewardship of our community. Through collaboration and partnership, we enhance and promote innovation that enriches our community, natural resources and businesses.

This mission statement reiterates the sentiment of the current mission statement with the addition of declaring the intent and idea(s) of promoting partnerships and innovation going forward. Therefore, the Mission of Langlade county is now consistent with its current operations and is the beacon that describes the purpose of the county government.

Core Values

During the 2020 Planning Sessions with the Steering Committee, Langlade County identified the following 7 core values that are being advocated throughout the organization:

- **Stewardship** - Langlade County Employees will act carefully and responsibly in the management of the financial, human and natural resources entrusted to Langlade County to ensure success now and going forward.
- **Respect Thru Diversity**- We respect each other's differences and value diversity as it fosters empathy, kindness, creativity, innovation, inclusion and empowerment. We will conduct business with respect, honor, and esteem for each other and the community with due regard for the wishes, rights, and traditions of all involved in our organization and communities.

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- **Integrity Thru Transparency** - We conduct business ethically, fairly and responsibly so the public/community can confidently place their trust in Langlade County Government. We will be accountable for our actions and make the right decisions because it is the right thing to do.
 - **Continuous Improvement** - We are committed to being accountable, creative and of a mindset of solving problems and finding solutions - both large and small.
 - **Can-Do Attitude** - We expect all employees, board members, contractors, and volunteers to help us accomplish our mission and goals, serving the public with a can-do attitude.
 - **Shared Purpose** - Through our shared purpose, we will build confidence and trust through collaboration and teamwork, actively involving our community in the decision-making process, with the ultimate goal of achieving our Mission and Vision.
 - **Excellence** - We are committed to doing the best job we can every day and to respond to our customer's requests equitably and in a timely, informative and thorough manner.

Strategies

During the 2020 Strategic Planning Sessions with the Steering Committee, Langlade County agreed that to reach its goals in the next 3 years (2021 - 2023), the following 11 strategies will require the greatest focus, effort and resources. For efficiency and clarity, these strategies were further identified into the categories of Internal Efficiency, Community Facing, Revenue Generating, or Mandated Services.

1. STRATEGIC CATEGORY: INTERNAL EFFICIENCY

1A: Goal - Assess, Update and/or Develop Internal Policies and Procedures

Rationale: Clear, concise and consistent internal policies and procedures are integral to the leadership and employees of Langlade County and its daily operations. Clear Policies and Procedures provide

- Clear direction
- Clarity in execution, responsibility, and accountability
- Consistency across different departments

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- Efficiency in day-to-day operations allowing more creativity and innovation
 - Transparency to our customers and constituents
 - Basis to achieve organizational goals according to our Mission..

During the course of the strategic planning process, it became evident that outdated, inconsistent and/or absent policies and procedures were contributing to inefficiencies within and between departments and with the county board. This has led to operating inefficiencies causing undo time and resources to achieve results and at worse conflict, as a result of inconsistent practices. We believe that with policies and procedures that are clear and consistent, we will be adhering to our core values (i.e. stewardship, transparency) ultimately saving time, resources and creating a better working environment.

Success/Metrics

1. Assessment: The first step will be to assess current policies and procedures and categorize as:
 - a. Outdated
 - b. Absent
 - c. Current and applicable (Quick Review)

This assessment step will allow us to put together a project plan and identify individuals/departments needed to achieve this goal.

2. Success will be the end product with all policies and procedures evaluated, updated, created, and reviewed by the board. Steps to success include:
 - a. Assessment of current situation (1st Quarter)
 - b. Project Plan approved (2nd Quarter) with the goal of having all policies updated by EOY 2023.
 - c. Quarterly Updates with review and approval to the board (Led by County Manager)

1B. Goal: Definition/Improvement of Communication Processes

Rationale: Communication builds on our first goal of developing/updating policies and procedures with both goals sharing in rationale. The Strategic Planning Committee decided to identify communication as its own unique goal because given its broad scope it was deemed important to break Communication into three sub-goals in order to be better achievable. Those being:

1. Internal Communication including communication with and within the county board
2. Communication with Department Heads and Employees
3. Communication with the public community.

During the planning process, it became evident that although communication was abundant and done respectfully, it was inconsistent in frequency, mode, content and expectancy causing confusion and inefficiency. In addition, the committee felt that it was time to get a more structured communication strategy for employees and to the public to better align with our stated mission and core values. Although flexible to overlap, we felt it best to focus on Internal Communication during year 1 (FY 2021), Employee Communication during year 2 (FY 2022) and communication with the community during year 3 (FY 2023).

Success/Metrics

1. Assessment: As with the previous goal, an assessment of current practices is the first measure of success to better understand current communication practices that are
 - a. Outdated
 - b. Non-existent
 - c. In place with only a need to review

2. Success is harder to measure in the traditional sense. We recognize that the most notable success of this goal will be reflected in better efficiencies and transparency both internally and with the County and be an integral piece of showing the community our core values. However, to that effect we would expect in each respective year, that we could measure our progress with the following estimated timelines:

- a. Assessment - Months 1-3
- b. Project Plan with options defined and committees/individuals identified in month 4.
- c. Definition/Identification of communication tools, frequency, audience, etc.. - Months 5-10
- d. Implementation/Optimization in months 11 & 12

Through this process and afterward, measures such as different modes of communication, frequency and surveys of both staff and community can give us the needed feedback to ascertain whether we are being successful or need to change course.

1C: GOAL: Implement a Performance Management System to Foster Employee Engagement and Development

Rationale: As the planning committee went through their process this year, it became apparent that leadership shared in the belief of the importance of taking care of the employees of Langlade County. It absolutely fits into our Mission and Core Values. In addition, the costs of both managing unmotivated employees and/or replacing employees and staffing gaps in the process puts significant strains on the County, both financially and culturally. As we work hard to innovate and bring new businesses into Langlade County, we will be better positioned if we have consistent and motivated staff to execute our Mission. While we currently strive to give performance feedback and reward employees for their hard work, the committee realized that these efforts were not

fully centralized and consistent across departments. The committee also felt a renewed importance to formally incorporate professional development as part of performance management.

Success/Metrics

Success of a performance management system will be measured by both the perceptions of our employees and by the community at large in terms of whether we treat and manage our employees by the same core values that we have stated at the beginning of this strategic plan, specifically shared purpose, respect through diversity, excellence and can-do attitude.

Metrics to measure our success will include:

1. Staff Turnover - Our goal is to cut our employee turnover percentage by at least 50%.
2. Employee Surveys - We will conduct surveys of our employees at the beginning of the implementation process and if successful, expect scores to significantly increase year over year until continually above 80%.
3. Merit Distributions - We hope to distribute merit increases (when budget approved) to $\geq 90\%$ of our employees.
4. Productivity - While this actual number will vary depending on job and/or department, we expect employee productivity to increase year over year showing our commitment and our employees commitment to growth and innovation.
5. Continuing Education and Professional Development - Our goal is to develop this program in year 1, and in year 2 and 3 have a goal of providing Continuing Education and Professional Development to at least 50% of our workforce.
6. A comprehensive performance management system and process - success will hinge on developing a comprehensive system by the end of year 1. This system will take into account current processes and

incorporate items such as real-time feedback loops, 360-degree reviews, employee satisfaction surveys, Scores for both productivity and for representation of our core values, career advancement options and merit distribution policies.

1D: GOAL: Assess Current Incremental Budget Process and Compare with Other Methods, Implementing the Best Process

Rationale: Financial responsibility and efficiency is important to any organization. However, in the case of Langlade county, a non-profit government entity, being good stewards of the financial resources given to us is paramount to our mission and values to ensure trust from our communities. Therefore, during our strategic planning sessions we purposely focused on financial resources/processes. There was discussion regarding funding and understanding where each dollar is allocated and equally important, why each dollar is being allocated. Healthy finances start with a healthy and robust budgeting process. Langlade County currently uses an incremental budgeting process which at the conclusion of the committees discussions may have limitations. Therefore, to move further in fulfilling our mission, it is important that Langlade County take a look at other options (i.e. priority-based budgeting), make a decision regarding the process and subsequently, implement the system(s) and process(es) to support healthy financial decisions now and going forward.

Success/Metrics -

Success for this goal will be the implementation of best practices in fiscal management from both a process and system perspective. Realizing that the current system may be confirmed as the best process, if the case, documentation of the analysis and decision process will be filed. Metrics that will help us track progress to this goal will be:

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1. Assessment Document - This document will detail current processes and systems with the identification of Positives and Gaps. This will aid in the process of exploring other options.
 2. Comparison Document - This document will include research into different budgeting methods and the systems that support those methods, comparing agreed on important pieces to the current system (i.e. Pros and Cons)
 3. If a new system is recommended and budget approved, a detailed project plan will be put together outlining set up, implementation and training with specific timelines and budget targets to ensure success and accountability.

2. STRATEGIC CATEGORY: COMMUNITY FACING GOALS

2A: GOAL: Operationalize Sober Living Facility

Rationale: The sober living facility has been in progress for a while and recently had a project restart in August of 2020. This facility, when finished, will be vitally important to Langlade County and its citizens to fulfill its Mission of providing for the health, safety and economic well-being of its citizens. In addition, the goal of this facility is to lessen the financial burden on the county that displaced families and overcrowded court systems present. This facility being successful has positive implications both short and long-term.

Success/Metrics

Success is a building that is fully operational and funded by both the county and various business partnerships. Success is also the downstream effect of improved services to our citizens, less fiscal burden of dealing with displaced families/children and court rooms that are less crowded. Metrics involved will be:

1. Project Plan - A detailed project plan needs to be put into place by the county to track timelines, budgets, partnerships. This plan needs to be accompanied by a

project lead and implementation committee to ensure timely success and accountability.

2. Occupancy - The goal will be to have 8 rooms fully functional with an average graduation rate of 7 residents every 9 months.
3. Families Reunited - An increased rate/percentage in reuniting families once displaced.
4. Court Cases - A decrease in court cases due to family displacements and multiple offenders

2B: GOAL: Readiness for a Community Center

Rationale: A community center has been discussed at length over the past several years at various board and committee meetings. It is a project that has been “Started” and “Paused” multiple times. Having a community center presents multiple positive influences on our community. Most importantly, it fuels the part of our Mission statement to “..promote innovation that enriches our community, .. and businesses.”. The County Board communicated the importance of this project to the planning committee. While we think having the community center being fully operational within this strategic plan timeline might be unrealistic, we do feel that performing the base work to formally look at feasibility, partnerships, budgets and timelines is an important piece of this strategic plan for 2021-23.

Success/Metrics

Success will be measured by identifying, in detail, the steps and costs of this project.

Metrics and/or action items that we will focus on will include:

1. Feasibility Study - A formal feasibility study needs to be created and presented to the board for approval that includes estimation of resources, timelines, return on investment, county level of responsibility, etc.. If approved by the board, then the following become a part of this strategic plan goal:
 - a. Identification of Project Lead and Project Feasibility Committee

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- b. Secure Business Partnerships
 - c. Detailed Project Plan reviewed and approved by the Board.

2C. GOAL: Functioning Pretrial Drug Treatment Program with Active Participants

Rationale: A consistent message and concern of the Steering committee and anyone on the board consulted during this process was the cultural and financial strain that the current problem of Methamphetamine imposes on Langlade County. It's negative impacts are felt deep into the workings of the county and the community that we are stewards for. District Attorney Elizabeth Gebert attended a couple steering committee meetings and shared that over 1/3 of the felony cases in Langlade county are the result of Methamphetamine and that we are on track to have a record number of cases in 2020 (90 cases as of August 2020). An issue where just 7 years ago there were 0 cases in the county. One program that has been proposed to help alleviate or lessen this issue is a Pretrial Drug Program. Ms. Gebert took us through the importance of this program and the expected positive results. The committee decided to add this goal to the strategic plan even though significant work has already been done to both emphasize its importance and formalize the follow up and accountability. The current goal is to have this program be functioning by April 2021. A grant was in process at the time of the meeting that will help fund this goal.

Success/Metrics

Success of this program will ultimately be measured on the number of successful participants. Therefore, up front metrics to be tracked will include the number of

participants and graduates of the program (and subsequent %). The district attorney's office will lead this project and will be asked for a detailed project plan so that budgets, timelines and accountabilities can have follow up and accountability (i.e. both grant dollars and partnerships will be part of this). Given that this program will be fully functioning for a good part of the time period of this strategic plan, the goal will be to look at measures such as Reunification of Families, Jail Usage, Reduction of Recidivism, and actual court case load to assess its success.

2D: GOAL - Increase Parent/Adult Education to Enhance Community Quality of Life

Rationale: During Steering committee sessions, there were lengthy and productive conversations around better providing for the community. This not only achieves our mission going further to help those in the community both stay and thrive in Langlade County. In turn, this would lessen the financial strain of the county having to aid those who cannot survive on their own as well as empower our community to innovate, making our communities places of destination. Therefore, the goal of increasing the awareness, offerings and attendance at Adult Education events within the community is a strategic goal. Recognizing that other community businesses offer events, one piece of this goal would be to help coordinate so that there is one place for the community to go and access information.

Success/Metrics

Success of a program like this can simply lie in its intent to further the mission of the county which is to provide services that promote the health and economic well-being of the community as this goal would provide better access and number of offerings for adults in our community to further educate themselves. However, in addition, there are some metrics and actions items that we can track as a county to help us analyze the success of the program and whether the specific direction of the program needs to alter. Those items would include:

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1. Attendance - An increased level of attendance would statistically lead itself to a more educated community.
 2. Offerings - increasing the number and breadth of education offerings will allow the community to better educate itself without having to go outside of the county to do so.
 3. Coordination of Efforts - By collaboration with local businesses also offering adult education services, the county can provide a central place of information for the community to access.
 4. Marketing/Communication - Both a formal plan to market these offerings to the community and an informal plan of accountability for the county (i.e. Board members) to communicate the plan and its benefits will build success and trust within and between the community and it's elected officials.

2E: GOAL - Improve Langlade Counties Branding, Continuing to Preserve while Enhancing the Use of our Natural Resources

Rationale: As part of the planning process, the steering committee was fortunate to have board member Robert Benishek as an ad hoc member for a couple of meetings. Mr. Benishek, who has been on the county board for over 50 years brought a depth and breadth of history of Langlade County. Through these discussions, we were reminded of the many positive aspects of Langlade County, especially as it relates to natural resources. Therefore, a strategic goal was created to put a plan together to better promote Langlade county and its brand presence (i.e. county of trails), to enhance its use of resources while also preserving what has made Langlade County unique over the years.

Success/Metrics

While there may not be hard data to measure the success of this type of goal, there can be some formal actions with subsequent plans and accountabilities to the board in order to gauge progress and estimate future projects and/or budget items. Those include:

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1. Measure of the number of publications and frequency of those publications and communication mediums.
 2. Formal networking efforts with local press and stakeholders to identify branding opportunities
 3. Formal meetings and agendas with the Langlade County Economic Development corporation to explore different types of business partnerships to further the branding and economic growth of Langlade County while preserving its natural resources.

3. STRATEGIC CATEGORY: REVENUE GENERATING

3A: GOAL - Increase Outside Revenue into the County

Rationale: Generally speaking as a government entity, Langlade county is consistently dealing with issues around finances and having the financial resources to provide the essential services to its communities on a day-to-day basis. When public and unforeseen public issues present themselves (i.e. COVID-19, Methamphetamine issues, the storm that significantly impacted lumber, etc..), these financial constraints become larger. Langlade County's mission is not only to provide the essential services but to also foster growth and innovation. To that effect, a goal of the county with this strategic plan is to identify and secure additional funding outside the normal and historic avenues.

Success/Metrics

Ultimate success of this goal is an increase of revenue into the county. This will be measured on a percentage basis and that percentage (additional revenue minus any additional cost associated with said revenue) will be set on a yearly basis by the board. The board or County Manager will get estimated information from the department heads in order to make an informed decision. This will be done by:

1. Assessment of current position - to establish the baseline of revenue, the amounts and what source(s) it is coming from.

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2. Grants - Discussions unveiled that there is grant money available. Initially, it is thought for department heads to identify an estimate of grant money at the beginning of each fiscal cycle. Success and revenue can be measured throughout the year as well as award percentage to better estimate future years.
 3. Economic assessment of possible business partnership done in conjunction with the economic development corporation.
 4. Project Plan - A detailed plan with a project lead will be used to track progress and accountability.

4. STRATEGIC CATEGORY: MANDATED SERVICES

4A: Goal - Create a formal process to understand priority and accountability for our mandated services

Rationale: Lantlade County currently and historically has done an excellent job of providing and executing those services that are mandated by the state. This is reflected in their scores, which continually are in the top tier of counties similar in size and scope of Lantlade. However, it was discovered that although there are/have been many processes put in place on a short-term basis to help with prioritization and allocation of resources, that to further our mission it would be beneficial to create a more formal process to ensure that we are being more proactive to the needs of our communities and to aid in the budget process.

Success/Metrics

Within the first 12-18 months of this strategic plan, the end goal would be to have a prioritization system implemented to aid in clear and informed decisions by the board of allocation and accountability of funds and resources. Led by the County Manager with input from the different department and committee heads, this system would include measures such as:

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1. Resource Assessment - A continually updated assessment of resources by service identifying gaps and/or surplus.
 2. Benchmark - level of service, budget and resource assessment comparing to other similar counties
 3. Surveys - Internal (i.e. employee) and external (i.e. businesses, community)
 4. Score Sheet - Through the mechanisms above, the goal is to assign a score/grade to each service. There was a similar process done in 2010 and that process should be reviewed in detail first in order to gain efficiencies in using any parts of that process that are still relevant.

REVIEW/UPDATES

A strategic plan is not meant to be a static document. It is meant to serve as a compass rather than an inflexible blueprint for action. The intent of this document is to identify key goals and provide clear measurements of success to create efficiencies in process and operations with an end goal of serving the Mission of Langlade County and exemplifying our core values.

A critical next step is to create an operational plan for this strategic plan. That operational plan, assuming each goal is its own project, will entail:

- Identification of Project Lead(s)
- Detailed Project Plan with milestones, deadlines and budgets.
- Identification of critical success factors and monitoring strategies to show progress toward the goal.

This strategic plan will be formally evaluated and updated at the beginning of each fiscal year at a minimum to help define annual objectives and to identify and define any changes as a result of unexpected changes. Any updates will be documented to ensure that operationally Langlade County is working from the most updated version.

ADDENDUM

During the strategic planning process, the steering committee identified two additional strategic goals that fit into the category of what the community is facing. Those goals were adding a second judge and the design and implementation of a drug court. At the time of the writing of this strategic plan there was new information and feasibility studies being performed that could delay or prevent these goals. Therefore, it was decided to put them in an addendum to the strategic plan. These goals can be expanded and added to the operational plan if new information and studies support them.

Addendum Goal 1: Readiness for Second Judge

Rationale: Increased caseload in the court system over the past several years has led to longer lead/wait times for court cases. In addition, the increase in caseload has caused capacity issues, rendering the system incapable of handling the number of cases with only one judge. A second judge would allow the system to get cases through the process in a timely manner.

Success/Metrics

Funding for the second judge is done partly by the state and therefore, success will be Langleade County being ready at the time the funding starts (That date is unknown as of the date of this plan). When/if this date is set, measures to aid us in achieving this goal will be:

1. **Assessment:** A current assessment will need to be performed to identify what will be needed to accommodate a second judge. There will likely be facility remodel/expansion (Capital), staffing needs, and a complete budget identifying the county's responsibility that will need to be completed.
2. **Project Plan:** With the information from the assessment and the date of funding from the state known, a detailed project plan can be developed with milestones and deadlines built in "backing" from the date of funding.
3. **Metrics:** Success metrics for this goal will be embedded into the project plan and managed by the project manager (appointed). Metrics for success after operational

would be identified during the process but would include measures such as time until hearing of cases, decrease in staffing overtime, Jail capacity numbers, etc.

ADDENDUM Goal 2: Drug Court Design and Implementation

Rationale: The rationale for this goal is the same or similar to that of the goal to create a Pretrial Drug Treatment program (2C) above. This goal is a “next step” goal which will be more successful if implemented after the completion of the Pretrial Drug Program, the Sober Living facility and having a second judge in place.

Success/Metrics:

Ultimate success of this goal will reflect itself in a decrease in jail time and capacity, repeat offenders and an overall decrease in drug related cases in Langlade County. The district attorney will be the project lead and will manage the program, including the creation of a project plan, policies and procedures and related success metrics that the board can monitor.