



STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026



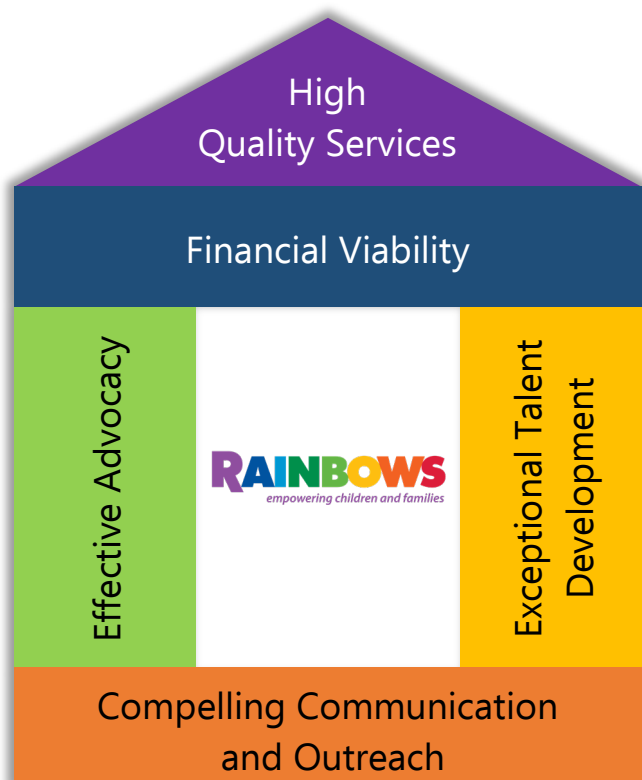
RAINBOWS
empowering children and families



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MISSION

Rainbows United enhances the lives of children with special needs and their families by bringing together community resources and providing customized services.



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Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to guide future priorities and decisions for Rainbows United during the years 2023-2026. In all, the plan addresses five strategic focus areas: High Quality Services, Financial Viability, Effective Advocacy, Exceptional Talent, and Compelling Communication and Outreach.

The plan aligns with Rainbow United's mission to enhance the lives of children with special needs and their families by bringing together community resources and providing customized services. The strategic planning effort was informed by data gathered by organizational and board leaders related to trends, conditions, challenges, and opportunities and included a detailed analysis of all programs within the organization. The Wichita State University Community Engagement Institute facilitated the planning process with ongoing guidance from the Rainbows United Board of Directors and Executive Staff.

Plan Format

Strategic Focus Areas: Based on themes derived from data and stakeholder input, these areas are the focus of planning efforts.

Goals and Objectives: Based on discussions of "what success would look like" for each focus area, goals represent an overall desired end-result and objectives provide specific results to be achieved.

Performance Measures: Methods to track desired changes in productivity, effectiveness, efficiency and/or resource acquisition.

Strategies: The general means or methods used to arrive at the desired goal.

First Step Action Plans: Initial steps that will allow staff to operationalize strategies, including a general timeline for these activities. The organization and its champions will monitor progress toward desired goals and objectives and use what they learn to adopt, adapt, or abandon tactics over time.

Champions: For each strategy, the person(s) who will initiate steps, track progress, and engage others in ongoing strategic thinking and doing.

From the President



At Rainbows United, Inc. we participate in ongoing strategic planning to guide our future priorities and decisions. For 50 years, Rainbows has been making an incredible difference in the lives of children with special needs and their families, and through smart, intentional strategic planning, we are ensuring that the next 50 years are just as impactful, if not more.

We can serve vulnerable children with special needs because of the many stakeholders committed to and involved with Rainbows. Our employees are knowledgeable and compassionate; our Board of Directors is engaged and dedicated; our donors and funders are committed to the children and their families. Without this strong team of support, we wouldn't be serving the more than 3,700 children with special needs and their families today, or those in the future who need the hope and support essential to changing lives. We are grateful for this strong support.

We're also grateful for the families who trust us to serve their precious children. It's a huge responsibility and we take it very seriously. Thank you to these families for choosing Rainbows.

As the needs in our community change and grow, so does Rainbows. As we implement our new strategic plan, our focus is on continuous improvement and growth so that the future for the children in our community with special needs continues to be bright.

Gay Kimble



Strategic Focus Area 1

High Quality Services

GOAL

All children with special needs reach their maximum potential and their families thrive.

OBJECTIVES

- Families and staff set goals for each child and their families.
- Children achieve the goals set.
- Children and their families feel supported by the Rainbows' team.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Each child/family has at least one documented goal.
- Each child/family meets at least one goal that has been set.
- Parent/family satisfaction surveys.
- Productivity measures/billing requirements (consistent and efficient).
- Number of children served in each program.
- Number of children on service waiting list.

STRATEGIES AND FIRST STEPS

1.1 Children and families receive quality services that meet their specific needs.

[Timeline: July 2023 – June 2026]

- 1.1.1 Investigate ways to review progress in programs that don't have regulatory progress measures.
- 1.1.2 Explore ways services could be provided differently.
- 1.1.3 Define what "quality" services means for each program, including meaningful baselines and standards.

1.2 Align infrastructure resources – including facilities and technology – in ways that meet the needs of the children and families we serve.

[Timeline: April 2023 – March 2024]

- 1.2.1 Continually assess technology and create a plan for technology updates to ensure ongoing accessibility to resources.
- 1.2.2 Identify space and infrastructure needs for individual programs that best meet the needs of children and families using information from the 2023 program review.

1.3 Continuously review and improve internal programs.

[Timeline: August 2023 – November 2023]

- 1.3.1** Learn from and engage with like organizations to ensure we provide the highest quality services.
- 1.3.2** Analyze wait lists to better understand community needs and revenue potential within all communities including those historically underserved.

CHAMPIONS

- 1.1** President, Vice President of Programs & Services, Program Coordinators, Board Operations Chair
- 1.2** President, Vice President of Programs & Services, Vice President of Finance, Board Operations Committee
- 1.3** President, Vice President of Programs and Services, Vice President of Finance, Board Operations Committee



Strategic Focus Area 2

Financial Viability

GOAL

Financial model that provides resources needed to achieve the mission.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify which programs are essential for community need and financially viable.
- Maximize the following funding sources in support of each program: grants, donations, fee for service, government funds.
- Continually evaluate effectiveness and financial viability of each program.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Program financial reports (reviewed monthly).
- Grant reports – Dollar amount received, and percentage of applications successfully funded (quarterly).
- Actual costs vs. budget (reviewed monthly).
- Fundraising totals vs. fundraising goals (monthly line item).
- Program productivity levels.
- Billing.
- Ratio of funding sources – balance of sources (benchmark of grant funding <30% of total).
- Administrative/program costs as a percentage of total revenue.

STRATEGIES AND FIRST STEPS

- 2.1 Increase program revenue through sustainable funding sources.**
[Timeline: April 2023 – June 2026]
 - 2.1.1** Continuously review programs to identify opportunities for improved revenue generation.
 - 2.1.2** Operationalize the program analysis.
 - 2.1.3** Provide program leaders with the skills and tools to manage their finances/budgets based on timely data and Coordinator input.
- 2.2 Increase and diversify fundraising revenue.**
[Timeline: April 2023 – June 2026]
 - 2.2.1** Develop planned giving, major gifts and endowment strategies.
 - 2.2.2** Evaluate current events and opportunities for maximizing impact.
 - 2.2.3** Investigate new grant opportunities from diverse funding sources.
- 2.3 Optimize operational expenses.**
[Timeline: April 2023 – June 2026]
 - 2.3.1** Continuously evaluate both fixed and variable expenses.
 - 2.3.2** Annually assess industry standard for percentage of administrative costs vs. total budget.
 - 2.3.3** Benchmark salaries using market standards.
- 2.4 Optimize facility utilization.**
[Timeline: June 2023 – December 2023]
 - 2.4.1** Utilize a Board Facilities Committee to develop recommendations for current and future needs.
 - 2.4.2** Assess expense reports for all facilities, including any major system updates.

CHAMPIONS

- 2.1** Executive Leadership Team, Board Finance Committee
- 2.2** President, Vice President of Development, Rainbows United Board
- 2.3** Executive Leadership Team, Board Finance Committee, Board Human Resource Committee
- 2.4** Vice President of Finance, Board Facilities Committee



Strategic Focus Area 3

Effective Advocacy

GOAL

Families and staff are empowered with the knowledge and skills they need to be effective advocates for children at the individual, organizational and system level.

OBJECTIVES

- Funding and policies that support quality care.
- Families are informed on issues affecting their child.
- Increase awareness at the state and federal level on issues affecting children with special needs and their families.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Increase in federal, state, and local funding.
- Ongoing participation in efforts to improve public policies that affect individuals with special needs.
- Advocacy information shared with families served through various resources.

STRATEGIES AND FIRST STEPS

3.1 Maximize advocacy efforts to ensure appropriate funding levels.

[Timeline: July 2023 – June 2026]

- 3.1.1** Determine annual advocacy strategy and ongoing opportunities.
- 3.1.2** Engage and build relationships with public decisionmakers.
- 3.1.3** Maximize Interhab partnership and regional advocacy efforts.

3.2 Support families in advocacy efforts.

[Timeline: July 2023 – June 2026]

- 3.2.1** Educate families on issues of impact as issues are identified.

CHAMPIONS

- 3.1** President, Vice President of Programs & Services, Vice President of Marketing & Communications, Board Advocacy Committee
- 3.2** Vice President of Programs & Services, Vice President of Marketing & Communications, Board Advocacy Committee



Strategic Focus Area 4

Exceptional Talent Development

GOAL

Attract, retain, and develop exceptional talent.

OBJECTIVES

- Families have access to consistent, high-quality staff.
- Staff have ongoing professional development and certification support.
- Succession plans are in place to assure stable, high-quality leadership.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Turnover/vacancy rates by program or department.
- Retention (tenure) rates.
- Employee engagement/organizational culture score.
- Program staff to total staff ratio.

STRATEGIES AND FIRST STEPS

4.1 Attract and hire high-quality candidates who help us meet the organization's mission and model our guiding principles.

[Timeline: May 2023 – July 2023]

- 4.1.1** Determine quality candidate attributes.
- 4.1.2** Develop comprehensive recruitment materials.
- 4.1.3** Research and experiment with multiple methods of recruitment.

4.2 Create and implement staff development plans.

[Timeline: July 2023 – December 2024]

- 4.2.1** Create feedback mechanism(s) that guide executive leadership.
- 4.2.2** Create and implement a leadership development plan that responds to needed skills.

4.3 Preserve, strengthen, and promote a positive Rainbows' culture.

[Timeline: January 2024 – March 2025]

- 4.3.1** Evaluate and strengthen the elements of our work environment that promote employee retention.
- 4.3.2** Implement employee engagement survey and communicate results.
- 4.4.3** Create an action plan based on survey results.

CHAMPIONS

- 4.1** Vice President of Human Resources, Board Human Resource Committee
- 4.2** Executive Leadership Team, Vice President of Human Resources, Board Human Resources Committee
- 4.3** President, Vice President of Marketing & Communications, Vice President of Human Resources



Strategic Focus Area 5

Compelling Communication and Outreach

GOAL

Engage all stakeholders to understand and share the Rainbows' story of successfully changing lives to ensure the organization delivers on its mission.

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure stories and messages about Rainbows successfully changing lives reaches identified stakeholders.
- Provide ongoing internal communication to staff that reflects the culture of the organization, the needs of staff, the families served, and celebrates their diversity and accomplishments.
- Increase awareness of issues affecting children with special needs.
- Increase inclusivity in our communications.
- Engage community and corporate volunteers to support Rainbows' mission.
- Support Rainbows' mission with materials, messages, and partnerships.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Identified marketing key performance indicators.
- Increased engagement with diverse communities and families.
- Scheduled ongoing communications (i.e., The Canvas, Primary Colors, The Spectrum, Volunteer Splash).
- Volunteer tracking report.

STRATEGIES AND FIRST STEPS

5.1 Grow external outreach through cultivation of stakeholders.

[Timeline: June 2023 – July 2026]

- 5.1.1 Engage with underserved communities through events and partnerships.
- 5.1.2 Continuously evaluate communication methods to identify new opportunities.
- 5.1.3 Collaborate with Development team to maximize fundraising success.

5.2 Develop and implement internal communication strategies.

[Timeline: June 2023 – December 2026]

5.2.1 Keep employees up-to-date on Agency activities.

5.2.2 Communicate program changes to identified audiences.

5.3 Support growth of volunteer program.

[Timeline: June 2023 – December 2025]

5.3.1 Cultivate relationships through recruitment of corporate volunteers.

5.3.2 Support program needs through volunteerism.

CHAMPIONS

5.1 Executive Leadership Team, Board Communications Committee

5.2 Vice President of Marketing & Communications, Board Communications Committee, Executive Leadership Team

5.3 Vice President of Marketing & Communications, Board Communications Committee



Moving Forward

A first and crucial step to ensuring a strategic plan's effectiveness is clearly communicating the roles of stakeholders. When they understand their roles, stakeholders actively work together to implement strategies, learn from their efforts, adapt, and continue moving forward until the desired outcomes are accomplished. During the planning process, champions were identified for each focus area strategy. These champions will not necessarily be the ones doing the work associated with their named strategy; instead, they will *facilitate* the work. Performance measures will be used to track changes in productivity, effectiveness, and/or efficiency. Over time, Rainbows United will be able to see progress towards objectives in each focus area, leading the organization to achieve their overall desired end-results.

This strategic plan will be a living document. Updates will constantly inform, and perhaps change, the course of the plan. Adaptability ensures that the organization may stay attuned to the needs of their stakeholders—those they serve, staff, and volunteers. These recommended steps will help to ensure Rainbows United makes progress toward stated goals and objectives:

- The Rainbows United Board, serving in their governance capacity approved the Plan July 25, 2023.

Prepared by:



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