

Strategic Plan Summary FY25–27

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027





The Guild

FOR HUMAN SERVICES

Mission

The Guild's mission is to educate, encourage, and empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) so they may achieve their full potential to lead high-quality lives and participate meaningfully in society.

Vision

The Guild's vision is to create conditions for people with I/DD to experience quality of life, including material and emotional well-being; deep interpersonal relationships and social inclusion; personal development and fulfillment; as well as self-determination, empowerment, and protected rights.



Values

Safety

We believe that all people should live securely, free from unwanted fear, harm, coercion, and deprivation.

Autonomy

We advance personal empowerment and decision making over body, work, health, leisure, and relationships.

Community

We enhance connectedness, reciprocity, and belonging.

Dignity

We respect the worth of all people, including their virtues, beliefs, cultures, preferences, and choices.

Growth

We support the ongoing process of inspiration, discovery, and achievement at all levels.

Background

The Guild for Human Services is committed to strategic implementation of our mission to educate, encourage, and empower individuals with intellectual disabilities so they may achieve their full potential to lead high-quality lives and participate meaningfully in society. In pursuit of that mission, The Guild develops a strategic plan every three years to ensure that the organization's goals are relevant to current needs and stakeholders' vision.



In 2019, The Guild conducted dozens of focus groups with more than 300 residents, students, staff, and family members to imagine a 10-year vision for The Guild. Stakeholders were asked to complete a simple statement as many times as they desired: "I would be proud to be part of The Guild in 10 years if..."

Through in-depth discussions, laughter, and reflective thought, thousands of responses were documented on sticky notes, flip charts, and spreadsheets.

Using a detailed process of constant comparative analysis, these ideas for the future of The Guild were encapsulated in four vision statements:

- Enhance the quality of current programs and services;
- Expand work opportunities/external engagement for individuals served;
- Develop acute care model; and
- Build research acumen for publication prominence.

The Guild initiated this 10-year journey to operationalize our vision in 2021 with the creation of the FY22–24 Strategic Plan. Focused primarily on strengthening systems and organizational associations, The Guild was primed for expanding services in the coming years. Now poised for new opportunities, The Guild presents the FY25–27 Strategic Plan, making our 10-year vision tangible.

FY25–27 Strategic Outcomes

Over the next three years, The Guild will work to achieve the following:

- **ENHANCE** the quality of programs through deepening service models and consistent staffing.
- Create a body of **RESEARCH** that reflects the needs of people with I/DD.
- Expand supported **WORK** opportunities and external engagement for individuals served at The Guild.
- **BUILD** community-based residential care model for adults with co-occurring I/DD and intensive mental health needs.

Enhance

Strategic Outcome

The Guild will enhance the quality of current programs through targeted services and consistent staffing.



Need

People with I/DD and complex needs require thoughtful, knowledgeable, and consistent caregivers to support daily needs. Direct support professionals (DSPs) facilitate independence and community integration, recognize changes in personal needs and wellbeing, and advocate for the rights and desires of those they support. To perform these myriad roles, DSPs must build trusting relationships and mutual understanding with the people they serve. They also must have a wide range and depth of knowledge, skills, and mentors. Resources must be accessible and specific to their circumstances.

Enhance Goals

1

Clinical supports

Integrate a full suite of clinical supports into all milieus at The Guild, including specific attention to nonspeaking individuals.

2

Interoceptive supports

Invest in universal and individualized interoceptive supports for residents and students to improve nutrition, medication, and physical wellbeing.

3

Staff retention

Improve staff retention by implementing appreciation and recognition initiatives that support social esteem, growth, and cultural belonging.

4

Advocacy

Drive systems of change both internally and externally to support the rights, choices, and leadership of people with cross-cultural and intersectional identities.

Research



Strategic Outcome

Build a body of research related to the needs of people with I/DD and their caregivers.

Need

Systematic exclusion of people with I/DD from research limits the generalizability of research findings and perpetuates inequalities in fields as varied as health, marketing, politics, and education. Much of the existing research on people with I/DD and caregivers focuses on deficits, behavior modification or compliance-driven modalities of education rather than a person-centered research agenda.

Research Goals

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- 1 Direct support staffing**
Improve evidence-based practices of care through existing workforce development literature, staff participation in assessments, and production of research materials such as case studies.
 - 2 Community access and inclusion**
Engage residents, students, and staff in research on community access, inclusion, and support for people with no or limited spoken language in order to produce a universal framework for inclusion, case studies, and measurements for community access and quality of life indicators.
 - 3 Mental health and wellbeing**
Build upon The Guild's partnership efforts with local psychiatric services and mental health literature that aligns and contrasts with student and resident experiences at The Guild.
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Work

Strategic Outcome

Expand supported work opportunities and external engagement for individuals served at The Guild.



Need

People with disabilities are underrepresented in the workforce and face unique challenges in gaining employment. According to the Center for Research on Disability, only 42.7% of individuals with disabilities in Massachusetts were employed in 2022. Those who receive job development and placement training have greater success securing and retaining jobs; yet there are long waiting lists for the limited programs available.

Work Goals

1

Store front

Develop a business plan and program model for a funded small business in the community that supports workers with I/DD.

2

Microbusinesses

Establish a minimum of two microbusinesses to support the vocational development of Guild residents in a way that aligns with individuals' interests.

3

Corporate partnerships

Create and strengthen corporate partnerships that enhance community access and vocational opportunities for youth and adults at The Guild.

Build Acute Care Model



Strategic Outcome

Develop a community-based residential care model for adults with co-occurring I/DD and intensive mental health needs.

Need

Co-occurring diagnoses of I/DD and mental health disorders are increasing in frequency, but the availability of specialized services for this population remains both limited and difficult to access. In consequence, there have been vast increases in emergency department (ED) boarding across the nation and in Massachusetts. Certainly, more psychiatric beds are needed desperately to stabilize short-term crises. However, the immediate crisis of ED boarding is also a long-term crisis of residential services, particularly for those with I/DD who may have recurring acute mental health episodes over their lifespan.

Build Goals

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- 1 Specialized services**
Identify and address barriers (such as placement, clinical support contracts, and sustainable funding) to the development of intensive group homes and affiliated emergency mental health services.
 - 2 Acute care**
Work with local partners, specialty groups, and networks to identify hospital/psychiatric stabilization partners to assist with acute care needs in community-based group homes.
 - 3 New residences**
Build out a thorough plan to purchase, modify, staff, and open a cohort of intensive group homes for adults with I/DD and complex behavioral health needs.
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