

first call

Strategic Focus 2022

Mission

To reduce the impact of alcohol, drugs, and addiction by providing quality resources to individuals, families, and the community

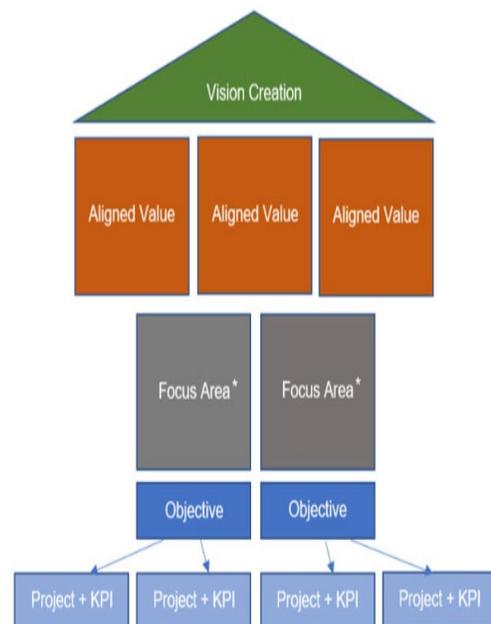
Executive Summary:

First Call is a leading provider of substance use education, prevention & recovery services in the Kansas City community and has advocated for a compassionate understanding of and response to substance use in America for over sixty years. As First Call continues to innovate its services to meet the evolving needs of its community, it embarks on a new strategic framework to plan and execute strategies for the future. This document reflects that framework with focused emphasis on (1) increasing access to services for those in need, (2) cultivation and implementation of data-driven best practices for substance use prevention & recovery services, and (3) expanding application of diversity, equity, and inclusion principles to improve behavioral health outcomes. **While First Call will continue to administer its entire cadre of important and much needed services, it will focus on exploring the aforementioned three areas consistent with the considerations and benchmarks noted in this document.**

Background:

Throughout late 2021 and early 2022, First Call's Board of Directors, agency leadership, and staff participated in three focus group sessions discuss content relevant to a strategic planning process following the Cascade Planning Model (see Figure 1). The Board and staff responded to questions about First Call's vision, the values which support the achievement of that vision, and then the service focus areas which align with said values. The following is the refined focused objectives of those sessions, first outlining values that inform First Call's service philosophy and then the subsequent focus areas and objectives aligned with those values. This document is meant to capture the high level strategic focus areas and objectives; First Call teams will then scope their intended Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to their focus area.

Figure 1: Cascade Planning Model



Vision

First Call believes substance use education, prevention & recovery services should be consistently grounded in evidence and accessible to all who need them—individuals, families, and communities. The organization embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion both internally and externally, and enhances its services through capacity building and the creation of strategic partnerships with schools, treatment centers, coalitions, courts, and other community stakeholders.

Values:

First Call's staff pride themselves in a value set that creates a foundation for consistency and excellence in service delivery. These values allow the organization and its staff to respond to the immense and intense substance use needs of its community with presence and compassion, but without themselves becoming consumed by and enmeshed in secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue.

This practice of self-care is critical to First Call's success - it must take care of its staff for its staff to be able to assist others. In the same way, it must embrace and catalyze diversity, equity, and inclusion in a parallel process for staff, clients, and First Call's Board of Directors so that all parties feel safe, included, and heard. This too is part of the truly caring and self-caring organization First Call insists it be. The following are the specific values First Call believes reflects this philosophy.

Value #1: *Person-Centered Service*

First Call recognizes that every individual is unique and services must be flexible to meet each client where they are

Value #2: *Community is Crucial*

First Call recognizes that people are social beings, and no one should have to face adversity alone. First Call seeks to help clients in building strength within the domains of social determinants of health so that the client will have a higher likelihood of sustained flourishing after First Call's involvement

Value #3: *Data-Driven Expertise*

First Call recognizes that needs change as environments change. For this reason, First Call is dedicated to a constant pursuit of data-driven best practice that embraces the flexibility to adapt as needed

Value #4: *Collaboration is Key*

First Call recognizes that it cannot be everything for everyone; rather, it is more effective when it works collaboratively with other service providers to ensure service gaps are filled by the most appropriate providers

Value #5: *Kindness*

First Call recognizes that, above all else, people need acceptance, not judgment. Being kind is always possible, even during difficult conversations

Maintaining Excellence

While the following three strategic focus areas are service areas First Call would like to expand and grow into in the coming years, First Call also intends to continue providing and enhancing the core services it already offers. Such services include:

- *Recovery Services:* First Call's recovery services team provides assessment, referral, counseling, and recovery support for individuals at any stage of recovery both at First Call and at other metro-area partner agencies. The agency operates a 24/7 Crisis Call Line which is often the initial source of help for individuals and families.
- *Family Services:* Caring for Kids targets children and teens impacted by a loved one's substance use. How to Cope targets adults impacted by a loved one's substance use. Both psychoeducational courses offer ongoing follow up support through alumni groups and optional extended support sessions for graduates. How to Care is a two-part training for caregivers (foster parents, adoptive parents, grandparents, CASA volunteers, teachers) of children impacted by familial substance use disorder.
- *School-based Prevention:* First Call offers a menu of evidence-based and educational prevention programs at public, private and parochial schools on both sides of the state line, including Life Skills Training, Project Purple, Sobriety Group, Signs of Suicide, Recovery Panels and Youth Mental Health First Aid.
- *Community Prevention:* With support from the Missouri Department of Mental Health, First Call provides technical assistance to 11 community coalitions working to address alcohol, other drug and tobacco use in Jackson, Cass, Lafayette and Johnson counties.
- *Professional Development Institute:* Continuing education and certification classes for substance use disorder professionals in the Kansas City metro area. Professional Development courses focus on creating a diverse and well-qualified behavioral health workforce in the Kansas City area.

As First Call embarks on integrating new initiatives into its service milieu, it will continue to excel at providing its current core services to continue having the profound impact it has year after year on the community of Kansas City. This listing of core services is current as of May 2022 and will be updated in alignment with progress on this plan; this plan is subject to change.

Focus Area #1 – Accessibility

First Call knows that stigma and a complex service delivery environment can make seeking out substance use services and support difficult for individuals and families dealing with substance use disorder. First Call believes it has a responsibility to create as many avenues to service as practical, meeting people where they are in a holistic manner. First Call has made substantial progress on this front as they now offer many virtual and community-based services that used to only be accessible with an in-person office visit to their central location.

That said, First Call believes there's more work to do in continuing to prioritize accessibility in its services; a strategic initiative that allows First Call to further live up to its name. First Call's Crisis Call line is the organization's backbone – it provides instant access for those in need and will continue to be a focus as First Call utilizes it to enhance access and service delivery. First Call will structure its Crisis Call line based upon ongoing evaluation of the calls received and the feasibility of texting so that the Crisis Call line is optimally staffed at the peak points of call volume and in the most accessible way.

First Call commits to person-centered services to improve access. First Call will investigate expansion into harm reduction strategies; as defined by SAMHSA, harm reduction is a proactive and evidence-based approach to reduce negative personal and public health impacts of behavior associated with alcohol and other substance use at both the individual and community levels. First Call sees itself engaging in targeted prevention & recovery support, with warm handoffs to referred treatment and recovery service partners. In this way, harm reduction services will be an interdepartmental service delivery for First Call as it includes both prevention and recovery related activities.

ACCESSIBILITY OBJECTIVE #1 -

Explore ways to optimize staffing of Crisis Call line based upon evaluation of call data and feasibility of texting option

ACCESSIBILITY OBJECTIVE #2 -

Explore capacity needed to administer harm reduction strategies (Naloxone/Narcan & fentanyl test strip distribution and community education) and create a staff harm reduction specialist position to be responsible for creation of harm reduction trainings and service strategies

ACCESSIBILITY OBJECTIVE #3 –

Explore opportunity for a more easily accessible office location (downtown and/or east of Troost) either through office satellite expansion or service co-location with a strategic partner

ACCESSIBILITY OBJECTIVE #4 -

Develop lines of interdepartmental collaborative oversight to bridge individual and family counseling to loved ones of those dealing with substance use from the Prevention department to the Recovery Services Department

Focus Area #2 – Commitment to Data-Driven Practice

Substance use is a dynamic and constantly evolving field. For this reason, First Call knows it must be agile in its service delivery capacities and that it must constantly stay informed on what the current best practices are in the field. And it must share that knowledge with its partners and with the Kansas City community generally. One such area where First Call sees an immediate opportunity for educating around data-driven best practices is First Call's vast library of substance use training curricula and resources. First Call provides dozens of trainings both internally and externally, to staff, partners, stakeholders, and professionals seeking continuing education credits. This is an area where First Call is positioned to further formalize its training cadre and thus enhance both the quality of its trainings and the reach its trainings can have. Action needed to realize this training potential include creating an inventory of trainings past and current, establishing a peer review committee to review and approve trainings, and creating an interdepartmental platform for such processes as training occurs on topics related to both prevention and recovery.

Additionally, First Call also seeks to strengthen its capacity by focusing on strategic partnerships to fill service delivery gaps. First Call has many service delivery professionals in many areas of substance use, so it can build partnerships through multiple contact points within the organization. To do this, First Call needs to formalize a partnership process so that all staff are informed on how to go about vetting partnerships internally.

Lastly, while First Call tries to rely on nationally recognized evidence-based practice (EBP), it also collects ample data specifically on the populations it serves and it gets feedback from other providers doing the same. For this reason, First Call seeks to find balance between officially recognized evidence-based practice models and models which are proving effective but may not yet have EBP recognition.

DATA-DRIVEN PRACTICE OBJECTIVE #1-

Develop a peer review committee to evaluate internal and external training curriculums and presenters and develop a running inventory of trainings by audience and/or topic

DATA-DRIVEN PRACTICE OBJECTIVE #2-

Explore development of a partnership guide outlining core philosophies, core needs, core internal competencies, and internal protocols for determining who within the organization can seek, develop, and negotiate partnerships

DATA-DRIVEN PRACTICE OBJECTIVE #3-

Prioritize the adoption of evidence-based programs when possible, and invest in proprietary programs to build evidence base for future implementation and growth

Focus Area #3 – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

While one of First Call's core philosophies of service is the recognition and application of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), First Call would like to further embrace and embed diversity, equity, and inclusion into its business practice both internally and externally. We recognize that historically marginalized and underserved populations, such as Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) and LGBTQIA individuals are more likely to deal with addiction, drug overdose and health inequities. While First Call is positioned to implement Focus Area #1 and #2 objectives in the short term, the agency still needs to build capacity to realize some of its DEI-related intentions; such intentions include: (1) further utilizing its organization's DEI committee (comprised of staff volunteers) to drive internal DEI initiatives, (2) seeking sustainable funding to support a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion-focused position to oversee operational strategy and (3) cultivating the ability to serve Spanish-speaking clients. First Call will focus on continuing to build capacity so that it is effectively positioned to implement these and other DEI strategies.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION OBJECTIVE #1-

Identify staff and organizations who can assist in alleviating barriers to BIPOC & LGBTQIA communities and utilize those resources to develop expanded outreach and services

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION OBJECTIVE #2 -

Create and implement marketing strategies to educate partners about First Call services in effort to alleviate barriers to services for BIPOC and LGBTQIA communities

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION OBJECTIVE #3 -

Explore creation a DEI Strategy position within the organization's staffing structure to enhance internal DEI programs and initiatives

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION OBJECTIVE #4 -

Create and implement bilingual communication strategies and develop internal capacity for bilingual service offerings