

FY 2024

Strategic Initiatives



PLB FY 2024 Strategic Initiatives

Overview

The Productive Living Board for St. Louis County Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (PLB) was established in 1979 when St. Louis County voters passed a property tax levy to provide supports to residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in the areas of residential, employment, and related services. The present tax is set at 8.8 cents per \$100 assessed value and generates approximately \$25 million annually.

PLB invests in services provided by agencies with a demonstrated history of success and enters into funding partnerships, most of which are long-term, to support the needs of people with IDD throughout their lifetime. Currently, PLB contracts with 36 agencies that provide services to over 4,200 individuals.

In 2023, PLB developed a strategic planning process that will guide the organization's work by annually identifying timely strategic questions and incorporating stakeholder input and needs analysis in the selection of annual initiatives. This structure will align with the Board's primary roles as a funder of agencies, collaborative partner in addressing systemic challenges, and champion of innovation. While planning will occur on an annual basis, initiatives may be reaffirmed and prioritized for multiple years.

Vision

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are empowered to live the lives they choose.

Mission

PLB **funds quality services, fosters collaboration, and drives innovation** to create opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in St. Louis County.

Commitments

PLB's commitments expand on its mission by providing a comprehensive overview of its intentions and approach to its work. These commitments will guide PLB as it sets specific, annual initiatives that are responsive to the current environment and support ongoing strategies and collaborations.

Funding Quality Services

- PLB effectively and equitably funds, enhances, and protects a spectrum of service options.

- PLB builds the capacity of funded partners to deliver and sustain high-quality services.

- PLB supports awareness of and equitable access to services for eligible individuals.

Upholding Accountability and Transparency

- PLB is a trusted partner and respected leader in our region.

- PLB increases and demonstrates the impact of its investments through comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems.

- PLB is a thoughtful and accountable steward of public funds.

Fostering Collaboration

PLB convenes, collaborates, and coordinates with funders, partners, and service systems to address local and regional challenges.

Driving Innovation

PLB continually assesses and responds to the changing needs of individuals, families, and funded partners.

PLB drives the innovation of new or improved services in response to changing community needs and emerging best practices.

Background

PLB last engaged in strategic planning in 2016 when the organization was facing significant transitions. That process produced a detailed action plan, which was successfully executed. PLB embarked on a new planning process that recognizes the changes COVID has brought to the economic and services environment.

While the impacts of the pandemic are waning, the environment remains challenging and unpredictable. All indications are that this is likely to continue, so PLB chose to contract with The IllumiLab to create a plan that guides its work while providing flexibility to allow it to address current or emerging needs and opportunities.

The planning process incorporated feedback from all Board members, all staff members, Sarah Buek of The IllumiLab, and several stakeholder groups. The planning process began in February 2023 and ended in August 2023.

Board Members

Robert Wallace, Chairperson

Curt Ittner

Michele Liebman, Vice Chairperson

Lauri Koster

William Bolster

Scott Malin

Jasmine Chen

Felice McClendon

Melissa Garza

Staff Members

Becky Herschbach, Executive Director

Amy Meyer

Glen Goldstein

Jennifer Boedeker

Don Kaufmann

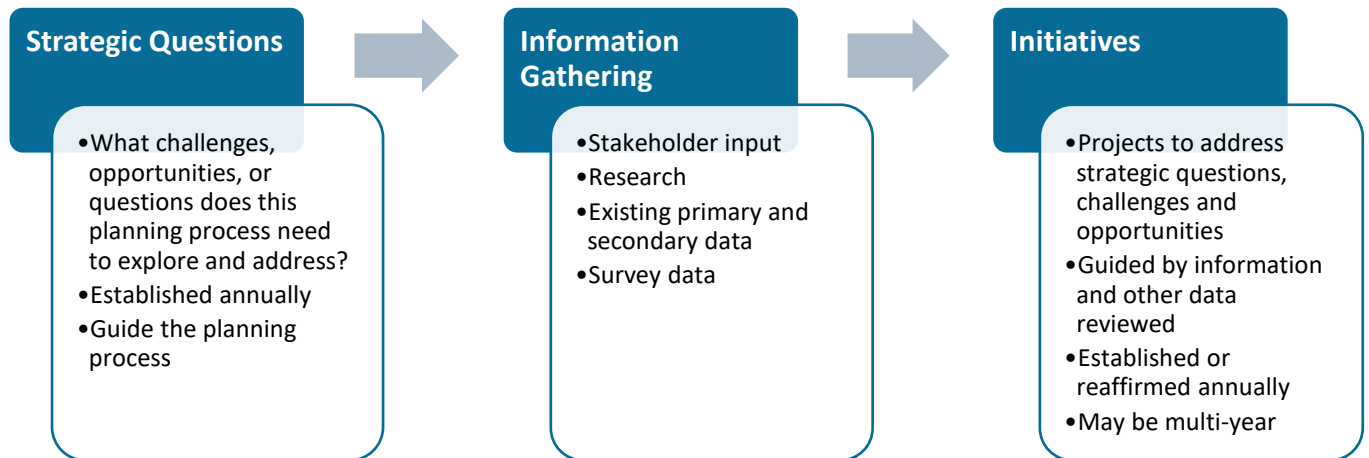
Gabby Buenger

Kim Kopff

Planning Process

PLB began its work with The IllumiLab by designing what it envisions to be an annual planning process for establishing stakeholder-informed initiatives that guide its work.

Annual Process



Because PLB's work is guided by statute and because it is committed to long-term relationships with funded partners, a traditional multi-year strategic plan outlining significant strategic shifts or new directions does not effectively support its planning needs. Instead, an annual planning process allows PLB the opportunity to be informed of and responsive to changing needs and conditions while remaining true to its mandate and mission.

When conducting its annual planning, PLB may affirm and carry forward the prior year's initiatives or discontinue some and add others. Annual identification of strategic questions and analysis of current information will focus each planning process, ensure awareness of the current environment impacting people with IDD and other stakeholders, and result in relevant, manageable, and attainable initiatives.

In launching this process, each member of the PLB staff was asked to identify, from their perspective, the strategic questions, opportunities, and challenges facing PLB at this time, which the planning process should address.

The PLB leadership team met to review the themes and selected and prioritized strategic questions to focus on in this planning cycle.

Strategic Questions

- How can PLB most effectively and equitably contribute to the protection and preservation of the developmental disability service system in St. Louis County in current economic conditions?
- How can PLB support and contribute to effective outreach and education to reach eligible individuals not yet connected to the service system?
- How can PLB most accurately, manageably, and regularly assess the needs of eligible individuals and of the developmental disability service system?

Guided by these strategic questions, The IllumiLab facilitated conversations with representatives of similar funding organizations and related service systems, funded agencies, and Family Navigation and Targeted Case Management providers. Discussions with funding organizations explored how stakeholders assess needs, what needs they assess, how economic conditions impact them, and how they conduct outreach and education to the general public. Sessions with other stakeholders sought their perspectives on how to identify and reach those not yet connected to the service system, how to conduct outreach and education, how to assess needs, and what needs they assess.

One key takeaway emerged: PLB has an opportunity to expand its work as a convener and collaborator and to assume a leadership role within the region to address persistent challenges. Challenges identified include a lack of awareness of the IDD service system, the lack of reliable transportation, difficulties accessing and navigating the complex service system, and bridging gaps between service systems at vulnerable transition points in the lives of individuals and families.

To supplement these insights, the PLB leadership team researched complementary funding streams; the prevalence and distribution of IDD diagnoses in the state, region, and county; recent guidance on interpreting and applying the SB40 statute; and analyses of service rates and utilization. The planning team reflected upon and synthesized learnings from all sources to inform the development of initiatives for the coming year.

Initiatives

Initiatives are the projects PLB will focus on in the coming year that address the strategic questions that have been identified. They help PLB realize its ongoing commitments and achieve its mission. While established annually, initiatives may be reaffirmed and carried forward year to year. Strategies will be created for each initiative, with updates provided to the Board throughout the year.

In alignment with PLB's commitments and in answer to the strategic questions that guided this year's planning process, PLB will pursue the following initiatives in fiscal year 2024.

How can PLB most effectively and equitably contribute to the protection and preservation of the developmental disability service system in St. Louis County in current economic conditions?

Fully utilize available ongoing funding.

Factors that impact the full utilization of funding are external, including the funded agencies' ability to provide billable services and actual tax revenue received. To manage these factors, PLB will remain in frequent communication with its funded agencies and make adjustments when appropriate. It will maintain strong financial oversight to identify ongoing funding availability and expend available resources in a timely and meaningful manner that aligns with current needs.

Identify opportunities to utilize one-time funding.

PLB's responsiveness to current and emerging community needs is supported by its strong financial position. PLB will analyze the variety of data gathered through this year's initiatives and work with partner agencies and other stakeholders to identify projects that best capitalize on one-time funding.

Develop tools to support informed decision-making.

PLB deliberately ensures its funding opportunities and decisions adhere to a consistently applied process and fund services that make an impact. Ongoing funding will not be sufficient to meet growing demand. Therefore PLB will develop tools to support the Board in making consistent, well-founded funding decisions that are within the scope of its statute.

How can PLB support and contribute to effective outreach and education to reach eligible individuals not yet connected to the service system?

Identify successful outreach and communication strategies employed by funded partners and across the non-profit sector.

Data analysis indicates that approximately 64% of the estimated 15,000 individuals with IDD in St. Louis County are connected to PLB and/or the Department of Mental Health. While Special School District and Vocational Rehabilitation also serve a significant segment of the population, several thousand eligible individuals are likely unknown to any IDD service system. To increase awareness of and access to IDD services in St. Louis County, particularly among under-served populations, PLB will identify and assess outreach and education methods that have proven to be effective and determine if there are opportunities for investment and community partnerships.

How can PLB most accurately, manageably, and regularly assess the needs of eligible individuals and of the developmental disability service system?

Create an annual process to collect and analyze needs information.

Although PLB created a system for collecting and analyzing service delivery and outcomes data, PLB primarily relies on its funded partner agencies, who have direct relationships with individuals in St. Louis County, to identify existing needs. A process of gathering information that ensures a holistic view is needed to support the development and funding of the most impactful services. PLB will create a process to capture a variety of real-time data from an array of stakeholders, ideally those who are and are not yet connected to the service system, to help the Board identify initiatives and focus funding.

Assess transportation barriers and their impact on St. Louis County residents served by funded partners.

Reliable, accessible transportation has been identified as a persistent and significant barrier to people accessing services for many years. While this is a recognized barrier, data regarding services or activities people cannot access and the impact on their ability to live independently and engage in their communities has not been evaluated. PLB will gather information and work towards potential solutions with its partners. It will begin its efforts by developing a better understanding of transportation barriers facing people receiving PLB-funded services.

Assess opportunities to leverage Family Navigation services.

Data on Family Navigation services shows it has filled an important information and advocacy gap in St. Louis County. It has provided short-term support to people in transition, in crisis, or in need of assistance understanding and successfully navigating the service system. As Family Navigation has expanded its collaborative efforts and become an integral part of the information network in St. Louis County, opportunities exist to identify and fill remaining gaps. PLB will explore the potential to leverage Family Navigation's impact by building its capacity and its expertise in specific service areas that align with identified needs.