

WeCAN

A Framework for our Future 2016-2017

Our new strategic framework reaffirms — first and foremost — the urgency and continued importance of our mission and the critical role we play in *empowering and equipping children, individuals and families to reach stability and self-sufficiency*. WeCAN is the only comprehensive safety net for the twelve cities we serve. The holistic approach to social services we provide with our One-Stop Opportunity Center has a high impact within our community. Through this new framework, we have recommitted ourselves to remain nimble in our ability to adapt to new challenges and anticipate others. This framework is not static; it is a living tool that will serve to guide our work into the future. We are committed to reviewing it regularly to ensure a thoughtful approach to strategic management that helps WeCAN achieve its mission.

Who We Are Today

WeCAN (Western Communities Action Network) provides:

- Financial assistance to individuals and families facing an immediate crisis.
- Innovative and responsive programs designed to help stretch the budget for struggling families.
- Accessible nutritious food to those who face barriers to access quality food items.
- Client support and education tied to the entire job search process.
- Referrals and other resources to help children, individuals and families.

Our values that uphold our work are....

- Respect and care about our community and its citizens.
- Enhancing family stability and self-sufficiency.
- Helping people build a “sense of community” through our various services.
- Creating a positive environment for our clients to live with dignity.

What We Know

Wherever people choose to reside, there should be a safety net in place for when challenges arise. By providing access to emergency services, as well as programs that build self-sufficiency, WeCAN does help children, individuals and families better their economic situations, and therefore, make progress against poverty in our community. “Making progress against poverty means crafting policies and programs that connect residents to the kinds of educational, job, and housing opportunities that can help them better their economic situations” (Confronting Suburban Poverty, 2013). Research supports the effectiveness of providing services in a coordinated manner to address the multiple needs of those in poverty and move them toward stability and self-sufficiency (Urban Institute, 2011).

How We Make a Difference

Grounded in the vision of “*Children, individuals and families thrive in a vibrant community with access to resources and support services*”, we secure and utilize community and private resources (in-kind, volunteer, and financial) – all for the purpose of moving individuals of all ages, races, cultures from one point to more progressively successful point – in a respectful and professional manner. We know that our services are invaluable from the data we collect throughout the year from our evaluations and client satisfaction survey results. We can report with confidence that we make a significant and positive difference in our clients’ lives.

Indicators of our success that we measure:

- Family will remain stable in their housing for 12 months.
- Clients have increased food security.
- Client is employed at the same, comparable or better position.
- Clients actually utilize the WeCAN support tools and see how they help them move toward self-sufficiency.
- Clients receive additional education to improve their financial stability.
- Clients are able to address any physical or mental health concerns.

How We Sustain Our Work

We view sustainability in its broadest sense – remaining vital and relevant, doing great work and being nimble enough to adapt quickly to changing environments. In doing so, we believe we can maintain a healthy balance sheet and cash flow that helps us to maintain and execute our mission. Our sustainability as an organization will be achieved by ...

- Exploring new program strategies and opportunities that enhance or enable us to further our mission and lead us towards increased financial sustainability. And we will continue to collect data, do research, and monitor emerging community trends and needs.
 - Move to the next level of providing the current “light” case management to more wrap-around and supportive case management services.
 - Address mental health needs within the community through collaborative partnerships with existing mental health providers.
 - Address addiction issues within the community through collaborative partnerships with existing addiction service providers.
 - Address ongoing and increasing transportation needs within our communities either in partnership with other groups or with providing a new service.
- Maintaining an organizational culture that encourages innovation, personal development and team work.
- Remaining open to opportunities and dialogue regarding community collaborative opportunities and strategic partnerships in order to achieve common goals.
- Building an agency operational (business) model that ensures adequate investment of both public and private resources and allows for the creation of reserve funds to sustain and fulfill our mission.

Appendix

WeCAN Operating Principles:

- client-focused.
- accessible and responsive.
- follow best and promising practices throughout our organization.
- operate with transparency and with accountability.
- respect and honor confidentiality and data privacy.
- committed to upholding and supporting our staff and volunteers.
- committed to equal opportunity & diversity for all persons without regard to race, religion, color, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity or expression, and sexual orientation), parental status, national origin, age, disability, family medical history or genetic information, political affiliation, military service, or other non-merit based factors.