Listening Ear Crisis Center

Always There

Annual Management Report & Tactical Improvement Plan

FY 2025-2026

Taking those we serve from surviving to thriving!

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Executive Summary

Over the past year, our agency has strengthened its role as a vital community anchor, meeting individuals and families exactly where they are and supporting their progression from surviving to thriving. Guided by our mission to offer hope, opportunity, and safe, affordable housing, we continued to deliver person-centered, trauma-informed services grounded in dignity, human rights, and the belief that every individual deserves the opportunity to build a meaningful life in the community. Our values-empowerment, ethical practice, consumer voice, and continuous quality improvement-remained the foundation of every program and partnership.

This year brought both significant accomplishments and complex challenges. We expanded our service footprint, enhanced technology infrastructure, strengthened staff training, and deepened collaborations with CMH partners, community organizations, and regional stakeholders. At the same time, we navigated workforce shortages, rising consumer complexity, limited affordable housing, and a shifting funding and regulatory landscape. Trends such as privatization, increased federal scrutiny, and threats to DEIA principles underscore the importance of remaining steadfast in our advocacy role while protecting the agency's long-term sustainability.

Our SWOT and gap analyses highlight clear priorities for the coming year: expanding preventative services for youth and families, increasing supports for individuals with complex needs, addressing the shortage of semi-independent living options, and strengthening community-based solutions to core issues such as housing, transportation, and basic needs. Internally, we recognize the need for stronger succession planning, enhanced compliance structures, improved communication, and continued investment in staff development to maintain high-quality services across a growing geographic region.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to responsible financial stewardship, strategic adaptability, and innovation in service delivery. Our future success depends on the knowledge, integrity, and compassion of our employees, as well as the continued partnership of our board, funders, and community stakeholders. Together, we will continue to meet people where they are, honor their lived experiences, and support their journey toward stability, empowerment, and thriving.

Cindy Seger, LMSW, QIDP, QMHP
Chief Executive Officer



Our Impact

Our Commitment to Community Support



29,580

Total Consumers Served



28,814

Crisis Calls Received



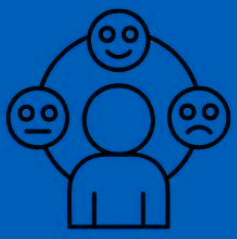
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Residential Services & Consumer Living Supports



144

Affordable Housing Units



106

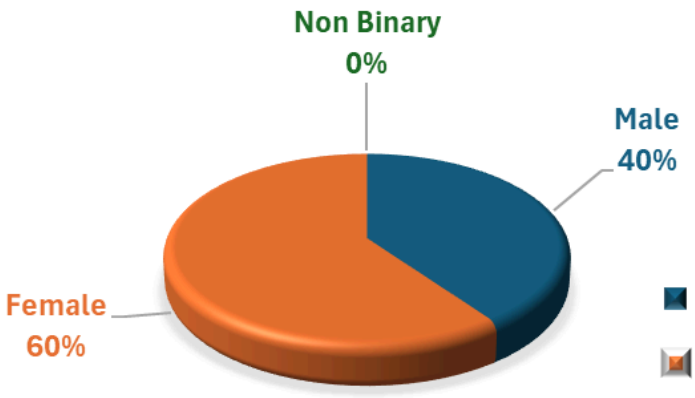
Behavioral Health Services



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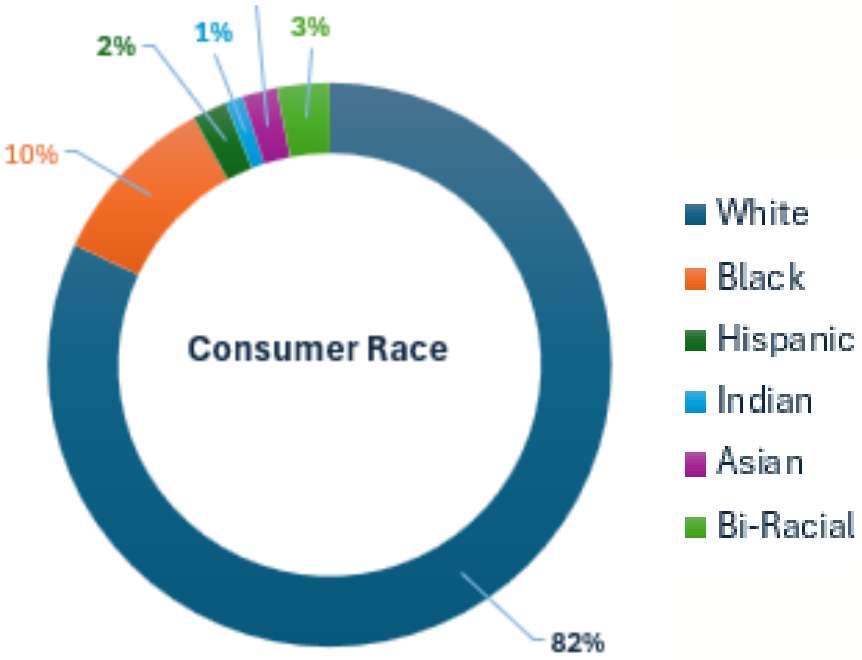
Children & Family Services

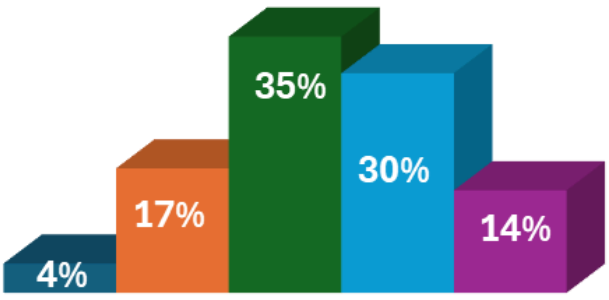
Consumer Demographics

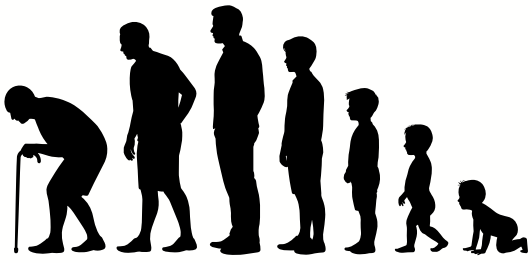












Purpose, Mission & Values



PURPOSE

Listening Ear Crisis Center is in the vocation of supporting and improving human life around the clock.

MISSION

Listening Ear offers hope and opportunity by listening to, supporting, and advocating for people who need quality services and safe, affordable housing.

VALUES

We **believe** that the people we support are valued members of the community and that we should support their dreams to achieve employment, spiritual connection and social participation.

We are **committed** to focusing on what people can do, the individuals' freedom to develop a life plan, the authority to control relevant resources, the support to obtain dreams and goals and the opportunity to become a responsible citizen.

We are **committed** to the highest standards of ethics and integrity, including protecting and advocating for the human rights of each person, while providing a culture of gentleness for our consumers and staff.

We are **responsible** to the people we serve, to our employees, and to the communities. Our interactions with segments of the community, consumers, government and the public, must reflect the high standards we profess.

We are **committed** to quality management and improvement, consumer satisfaction and meeting or exceeding system performance benchmarks.

We **believe** our future, as an agency, rests squarely on the knowledge, imagination, skills, teamwork and integrity of our employees.

We are **committed** to providing affordable services in accord with sound financial practices.

We are **committed** to providing innovative and best practice services while creating an environment of continuous learning for our staff.

Governance--Board of Director's



Jeff Smith - Chair
Vice-President, Isabella Bank
Finance, Banking, Financial Management, Community Connections

"I have always regarded the Crisis Center as the premier nonprofit organization in Mt. Pleasant, not only because of the important services they provide, but also because of the compassion and dedication of the people who make its work possible. Serving on the board of directors is truly an honor. Being part of the board allows me to contribute to Crisis Center's mission, help shape its long-term vision, and participate in decisions that promote continued growth, sustainability, and meaningful community impact. I am proud to lend my experience and leadership to such a dedicated team."



Heather Tubbs - Vice-Chair
Director of Budget Operations, Central Michigan University
Education, At-Risk Youth Leadership Skills, Policy Development, Strategic Planning

"I chose to serve on the Listening Ear Crisis Center Board because I wanted to give back in a way that was meaningful and impactful. Listening Ear provides a critical lifeline in our community both through the Crisis Center as well as through so many other programs offering support, dignity, and hope to individuals of all ages and families who may otherwise feel alone. It's an honor to contribute my time and leadership to an organization that truly changes lives through empathy and service."



Teagen Lefere - Secretary
Program Instructor, Michigan State University Extension
Financial & Home Ownership Education, HUD Certified Housing Instructor



Adam House - Treasurer
Boge, Wybenga & Bradley, PC
Accounting, Auditing, Finance, Federal/State Grant Compliance
Mt. Pleasant Soccer Club & Isabella Community Sportsplex - Board of Directors

"I chose to join the board of Listening Ear after learning about the organization and all the essential services it provides to our community. The operations of Listening Ear meet needs that are often overlooked and underappreciated. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have a small hand in helping Listening Ear carry out its mission and purpose."

Governance--Board of Director's



Kathleen Tarrant
Retired, Listening Ear Crisis Center-Director & Isabella County Court Magistrate

"I have been involved with Listening Ear for more than 50 years, beginning as part of the group that founded Crisis Center, Inc.—now known as Listening Ear Crisis Center—in 1969. During my 26 years serving as Isabella County Juvenile Officer, Court Referee, and Magistrate, I partnered with Listening Ear on many initiatives supporting children, youth, and families, including temporary shelter for runaway and delinquent youth. I have also served on the Board of Directors for a combined 22 years and worked as Director of the Crisis Center program for 17 years. I continue serving on the Board because I believe I still have something meaningful to contribute to helping meet the needs of the communities we serve."



Cindy Bay-Barron
Retired Director, Community Mental Health of Central Michigan
Quality Process, External Review, Administrative Oversight

"I joined the Board of Directors to support the various community programs provided by the Listening Ear Crisis Center. This local nonprofit organization has a long history of providing quality services and I am pleased to have a role to contribute."



Keith Cotter
Self-Employed, Rent MP, Douglas Day Property Group, CotterStone

"I joined the Listening Ear board to give back to the community. My skills and experience align well with the organization's mission, allowing me to contribute meaningfully. Serving on the board also provides an opportunity to help drive positive impact and inspire lasting change."



Theressa Clark, RN, BSN
GIRESD School Nurse
RN Educator/Infection Control/US Army Veteran

"I serve on the Board of Directors for Listening Ear because its mission aligns deeply with my personal and professional experiences. Growing up, my family relied on shelters and community-based services, and serving on this board allows me to give back to the kind of support that once helped us. As a registered nurse, I also bring clinical insight and a healthcare perspective that supports Listening Ear's work, including its adult foster care homes.."

Governance--Board of Director's



Kate Hodgkins
Director, Central Michigan University
Health Administration, Community& Medical Services, Social Work

"I began my career as a Mental Health Technician at Listening Ear's Crisis Center in 2011, so I was honored to be asked to join the Board of Directors. Listening Ear shaped my commitment to compassionate, community-centered care, and serving on the board allows me to give back to the organization that helped shape the professional I am today. I'm proud to support an organization that strengthens our community by showing up for those who need it most."

Thank You!

The Listening Ear Crisis Center Board of Directors provides strategic leadership, fiscal oversight, and governance to ensure the organization fulfills its mission with integrity and accountability. Board members bring diverse professional expertise and community perspectives that strengthen services, promote ethical decision-making, and support the long-term sustainability of the organization.

Listening Ear Crisis Center extends sincere appreciation to its Board of Directors for their dedication, guidance, and service throughout the year. Their commitment to ethical governance and community-centered leadership plays a vital role in advancing the organization's mission and impact.

LISTENING EAR... ALWAYS There!
LISTENING, CONNECTING, SUPPORTING, 24 HOURS EVERYDAY.

Listening Ear Leadership



Cindy Seger, Chief Executive Officer
Master of Social Work
Michigan State University
Credentials: LMSW, QIDP, QMHP, CMHP
"I am grateful to be a member of this leadership team. Listening Ear's long history, strong reputation, and commitment to high-quality, community-based services align deeply with my values and vision. We are an organization that meets people where they are and helps them move from surviving to thriving, and I am motivated to help carry that mission forward."

Joshua Caswell, Chief Operating Officer
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Accounting
Central Michigan University
"Listening Ear is a vital part of the community it serves. Like all non-profits, it faces huge challenges to provide excellent services in an ever-changing landscape. Using my education, experience, and talents at Listening Ear to face those challenges is an opportunity like none other."





Jill Stoddard, Chief Financial Officer
Bachelor of Science, Grand Valley State University
"Working at Listening Ear Crisis Center gives me the opportunity to use my accounting and administrative skills to support a non-profit agency and help meet the needs of individuals in my community."

Jim Boyd, Director of Residential Services
High School Diploma
Credentials: DSP, QIPD
"I chose to work at Listening Ear to advocate for and learn from the individuals we serve."



Listening Ear Leadership



Scott Harrison, Chief Human Resources Officer
JD, Administrative Law, Labor & Employment Law, Civil Rights, Cooley Law School
"I choose to work at Listening Ear to partner with employees in creating a workplace that values both our shared purpose and our individual differences."

Darla Earnest, Director of IT and Facilities
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Human Resource Management
Concentrations in Corporate Compliance and Business Law, Central Michigan University
"I have always believed deeply in Listening Ear's mission, and working for a nonprofit allows me to contribute to something larger than myself. As the Director of IT and Facilities, I serve as a support pillar, ensuring our infrastructure is strong, efficient, and prepared for growth so the organization can continue offering high-quality services. I am honored to have a role that aligns with my purpose and allows me to use my strengths and talents to help this great agency expand its impact and meet the needs of our communities."





Carol Banks, Director of Child & Family Services
Licensed Bachelor of Social Work, Michigan Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs
"I have remained with the Listening Ear because of the meaningful, personal nature of our work and the close-knit environment that comes with being a nonprofit organization dedicated to service."

Andrea Maxwell, Director of Behavioral Health Services
Master of Science in Counseling, University of Detroit Mercy
Concentrations in Addictions Counseling and Clinical Mental Health
"I choose to work at Listening Ear because I am passionate about supporting my community through the resources Listening Ear offers and being able to respond to community needs. I value the meaningful connections I've built with the populations we serve, the flexibility my role offers to make a real impact, and the continued growth and development of my teams."



Quality Improvement Process Overview

Listening Ear Crisis Center is committed to delivering high-quality, effective, and person-centered services. To support this commitment, the agency utilizes the **Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA)** cycle as the foundation of its **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process**.

The PDCA framework provides a structured, ongoing approach to monitoring performance, responding to emerging needs, and adapting to new challenges and opportunities. Through this continuous improvement process, Listening Ear works to enhance service quality, strengthen outcomes for individuals served, increase stakeholder satisfaction, and meet or exceed benchmarks established by accrediting bodies such as the **Council on Accreditation (COA).**

By actively engaging individuals served, families, staff, leadership, and governance in the PDCA process, Listening Ear fosters a culture of accountability, learning, and continuous improvement. This report provides an overview of key organizational functions and findings as they relate to the agency's CQI process.



PDCA FY 2025 - PLAN

During the **Plan** phase, Listening Ear identifies priority areas for improvement by gathering and analyzing data from multiple sources, including individuals served, stakeholders, staff, COA committees, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), and the Board of Directors. This information is used to establish objectives focused on improving service quality, consumer satisfaction, and key performance indicators.
The following section summarizes FY 2025 findings related to stakeholder feedback and satisfaction.

Stakeholder Feedback and Satisfaction

Stakeholder feedback and satisfaction are critical components of Listening Ear's Continuous Quality Improvement system and are aligned with Council on Accreditation standards. The agency actively seeks input from individuals served, families, staff, and community partners to assess service effectiveness, outcomes, and organizational performance.

This feedback supports a person-centered approach, promotes transparency and accountability, and informs data-driven decision-making. Information gathered is used to identify organizational strengths, highlight areas for improvement, and guide service enhancements, policy development, and staff training initiatives.

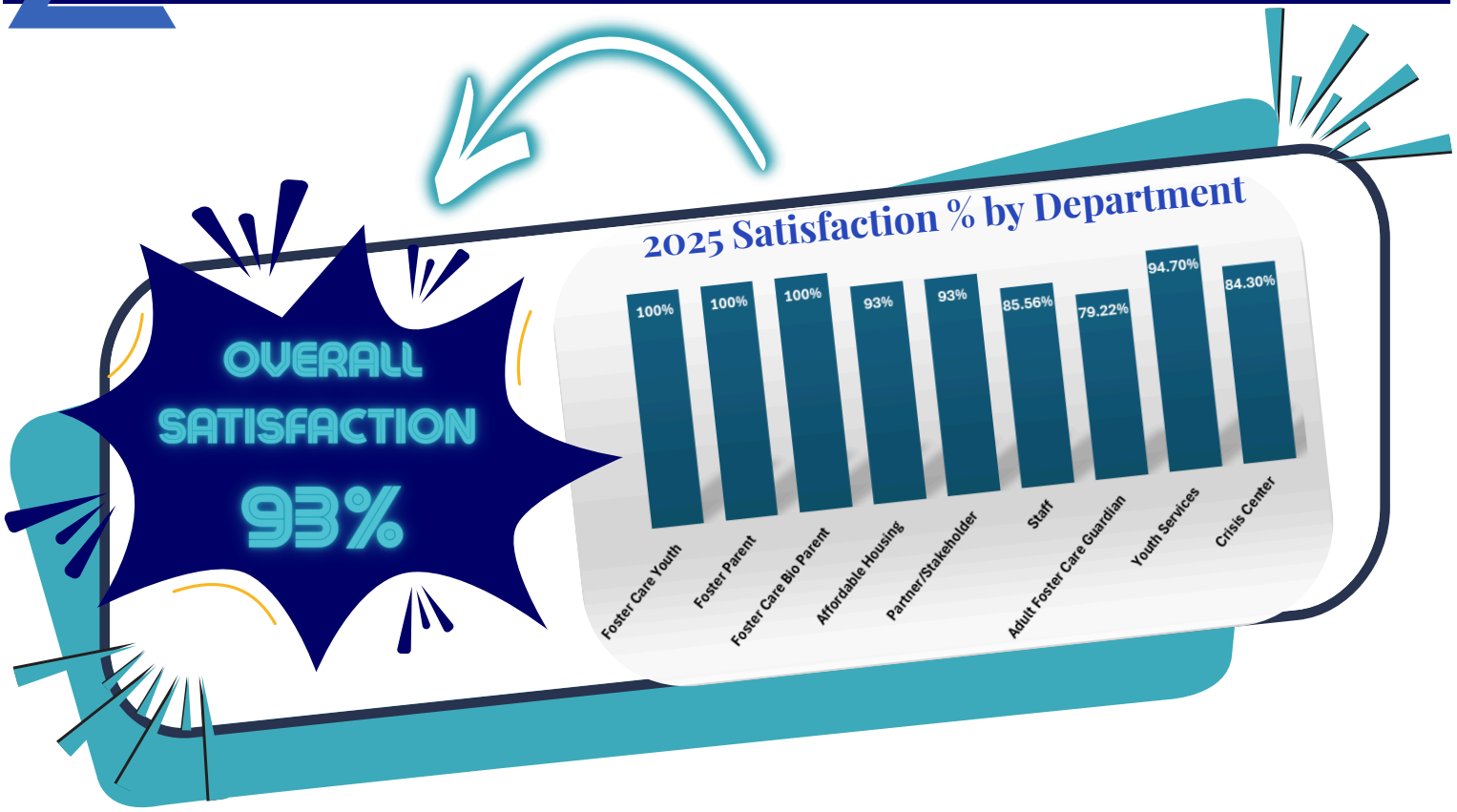
Listening Ear utilizes multiple structured methods to collect ongoing feedback, including:

- Annual stakeholder satisfaction surveys
- End-of-service satisfaction surveys
- Annual plan-of-service surveys
- Annual staff satisfaction surveys
- Performance appraisal feedback
- Standing agenda items during meetings to identify quality improvement recommendations

Feedback data are reviewed by leadership and incorporated into action plans to support continuous improvement and ensure compliance with COA standards.

Analysis of FY 2025 satisfaction survey results indicates strong overall satisfaction across programs and stakeholder groups. Aggregated survey data demonstrate an **overall organizational satisfaction rate of 93.1%**, reflecting consistently positive perceptions of service quality, staff support, and program effectiveness.

PDCA FY 2025 - PLAN



This visual illustrates satisfaction levels across all surveyed service areas. Strong outcomes were reported across programs, with particularly high satisfaction among foster care and youth services participants. Differences across stakeholder groups are reviewed as part of ongoing quality monitoring to ensure services remain responsive, equitable, and effective.

Public Education and Advocacy

In accordance with Council on Accreditation (COA) standards, the agency recognizes public education and advocacy as essential responsibilities of organizational leadership and governance. These activities support our mission, promote ethical practice, and ensure that the needs and rights of children, youth, and families are represented within the systems that impact their well-being. Through informed advocacy and community education, the agency works to influence public policy, strengthen service systems, and advance equitable access to resources.

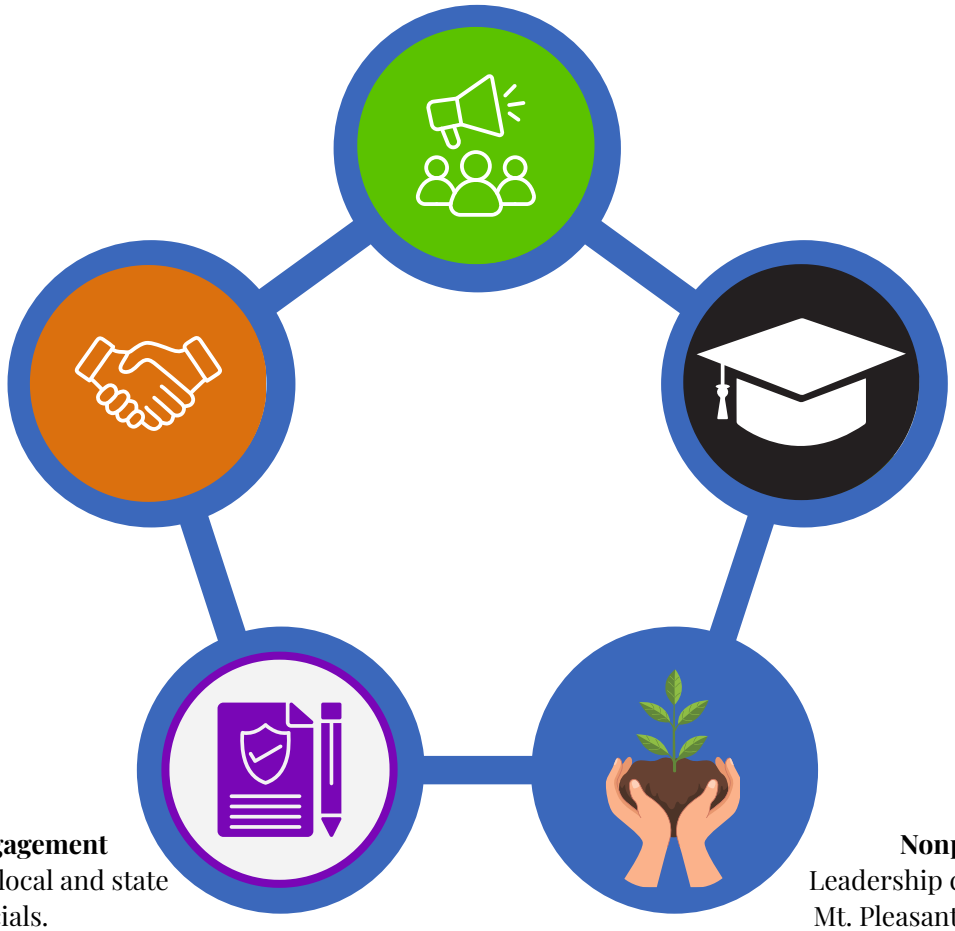
Consistent with COA standards related to community involvement, stakeholder engagement, and social responsibility, the agency actively participates in collaborative efforts that promote transparency, accountability, and continuous quality improvement. Public education and advocacy efforts are guided by data, lived experience, and professional best practices to ensure accurate representation of community needs and service outcomes.

PDCA FY 2025 - PLAN

During the reporting year, the agency demonstrated compliance with COA expectations for community leadership and system-level advocacy through the following activities:

Advocacy & Policy
Engagement with state and federal policymakers, including advocacy in Washington, DC

Community Partnerships
Active participation in the Isabella, Clare, and Gladwin Community Collaborativeses



Community Education
University-based education and workforce development through Central Michigan University

Policymaker Engagement
Ongoing education of local and state elected officials.

Nonprofit Leadership
Leadership collaboration through the Mt. Pleasant Community Foundation and the Michigan Assisted Living Association

Through these activities, the agency fulfills COA standards emphasizing organizational leadership, advocacy, and community partnership, while reinforcing a culture of continuous learning and system improvement. These efforts ensure that the agency remains responsive to community needs and actively contributes to policies and practices that support safe, effective, and high-quality services.

PDCA FY 2025 - PLAN

Analyzing Industry Trends

Analyzing current trends, identifying gaps, and securing funding are critical components of the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process. Understanding current trends helps Listening Ear stay updated with the latest industry developments and best practices, enabling informed decision-making and proactive adaptation. Identifying gaps allows for targeted improvements, ensuring resources are used efficiently to address the most critical issues and enhance service quality. Adequate funding provides the necessary resources for implementing CQI initiatives and ensures their sustainability over time. By focusing on these elements, Listening Ear can create a robust CQI process that drives continuous improvement and delivers better outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Gaps, Trends, and Funding Analysis

Gaps

- Housing
- Preventative services
- Supports for non-CMH and complex-needs populations

Trends

- Workforce shifts
- Policy changes
- CMH privatization Increased compliance and DEIA pressures

Funding

- Federal Scrutiny
- Medicaid Risk
- Need for sustainable, adaptable budgeting

This overview highlights key service gaps, emerging trends, and funding pressures that inform Listening Ear Crisis Center's strategic planning and continuous quality improvement efforts.

Service Gaps

Listening Ear Crisis Center continues to identify unmet service needs that impact individuals and families who fall outside existing eligibility criteria or require supports that exceed current system capacity. Notably, there is a lack of services for individuals who do not meet Community Mental Health (CMH) eligibility but continue to experience significant challenges requiring intervention.

Gaps persist in services for youth and adults with complex support needs, including severe emotional disturbance, serious mental illness, aging-related challenges, and behavioral aggression. In addition, limited semi-independent living options create barriers for individuals who cannot safely live alone but do not meet the criteria for an Adult Foster Care level of care.

Affordable housing shortages in Isabella County further complicate service delivery and long-term stability, particularly for individuals transitioning from crisis or congregate care settings. Preventive services for youth and families—especially those aimed at diverting crisis situations before they escalate—remain limited. While referral systems such as 2-1-1 can identify resources, there is an ongoing need for more direct, coordinated supports addressing basic needs such as food, housing, and transportation.

Emerging Trends

Several external and internal trends are influencing the agency's operating environment and strategic planning efforts. Increasing privatization of CMH services has implications for service coordination, access, and continuity of care. At the same time, the agency remains heavily reliant on government funding, highlighting the need to explore diversified revenue streams to support sustainability.

Workforce expectations continue to evolve, with staff seeking greater flexibility, competitive compensation, and enhanced benefits. Additionally, shifting federal and state directives—particularly those that conflict with Home and Community-Based Services requirements—create compliance and operational challenges.

The current national climate has also increased scrutiny of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) initiatives, raising important questions about how the agency can remain aligned with its core values while navigating funding and regulatory pressures. Heightened federal focus on potential fraud and abuse within the nonprofit sector further increases administrative burden and risk.

Funding Environment

The funding landscape remains complex and uncertain. Federal funding is under increased scrutiny, with expanded compliance and reporting expectations that place additional strain on organizational capacity. Potential Medicaid reductions pose a significant risk to service availability and sustainability.

In response, Listening Ear continues to evaluate its financial structure to ensure budgets are appropriately "right-sized" and aligned with accountability, efficiency, and service impact. Ongoing funding volatility requires the organization to remain vigilant, adaptable, and proactive in financial planning, ensuring the ability to respond effectively to changes in funding priorities while maintaining high-quality service delivery.

Evaluating Agency Resources

IEvaluating agency resources is critical in the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)process because it ensures that the agency's operations are efficient, effective, and aligned with its goals. By regularly assessing resources such as personnel, facilities, and procedures, the agency can identify areas of strength and pinpoint opportunities for improvement. This evaluation helps in maintaining high standards of service delivery, enhancing consumer satisfaction, and minimizing risks. Additionally, it allows the agency to adapt to changing needs and regulatory requirements, ensuring compliance and fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. Ultimately, thorough resource evaluation supports the agency's mission to provide high-quality services and achieve better outcomes for consumers.

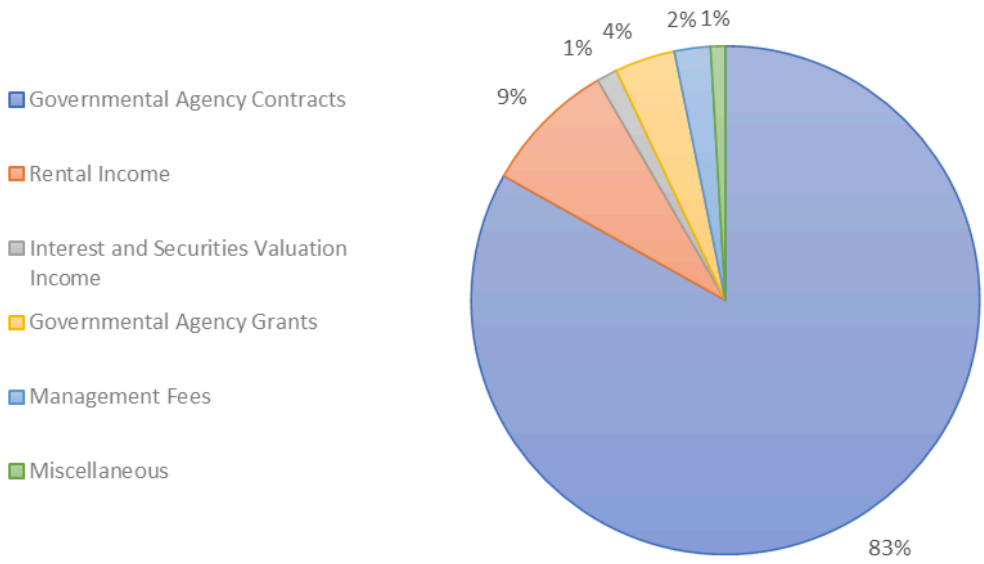
Finances

Finances remain a key metric for understanding the health of Listening Ear and its ability to meet future goals and commitments. Day-to-day operations have remained steady, with key programs such as group homes and rentals performing as expected. Some programs, such as the ABA program continued to lag behind key revenue and growth goals and decisions have been made to end that program.

Revenues

The majority of Listening Ear revenue continue to flow through the Michigan Medicaid system in the form of fee for service contracts, which represents 83% of the total revenue. This income is consistent from year to year and represent fee for service arrangements in which services are provided and billed based on standard units of care. The Agency rental program, in which affordable housing is provided to qualified individuals in the Central Michigan area, accounts for 8% of entity income. Valuation income was due to an increase in assets held at the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation. Listening Ear also receives competitive grants from state and federal resources, including the new PDP Grant. This new grant is 37% increase in State and Federal grant funding to the Agency over previous years.

Revenue Category	Amount
Governmental Agency Contracts	$ 13,202,160
Rental Income	$ 1,349,066
Interest and Securities Valuation Income	$ 208,439
Governmental Agency Grants	$ 607,187
Management Fees	$ 364,949
Miscellaneous	$ 147,436
Total Revenue	$ 15,879,237



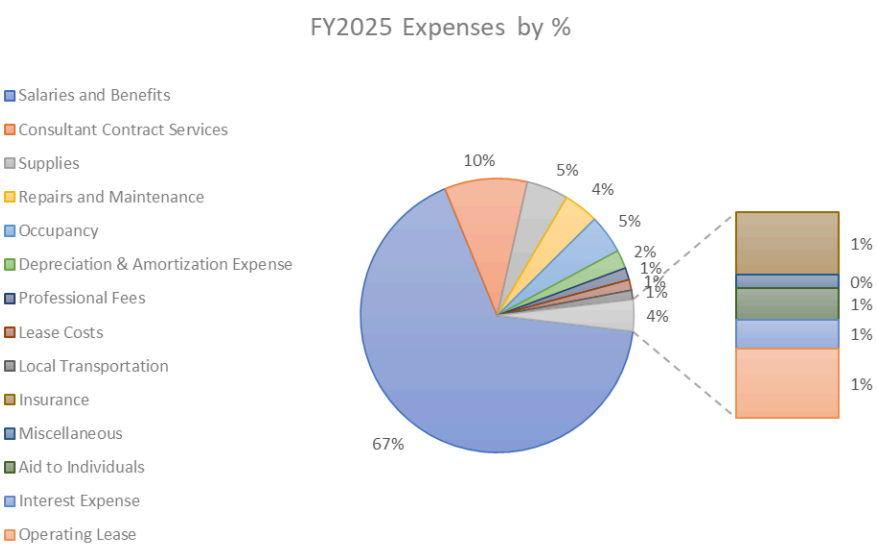
Expenses

Total expenses for the year equaled $16.1 million with average monthly operating expenses being $1.3 million. Salaries and Benefits are the single highest expense for Listening Ear, totaling more than $10.7 million for the year ($898,000 monthly). This represents 66% of the total expenses for the fiscal year. The next largest category is Contracted Services at $1.6 million. Most of the expense represent payments to child foster care parents as part of that program. The chart below shows the relative amounts of each expense category, less salaries and benefits

Expense Category	Amount
Salaries and Benefits	$ 10,782,528
Consultant Contract Services	$ 1,577,355
Supplies	$ 794,452
Repairs and Maintenance	$ 664,435
Occupancy	$ 738,204
Depreciation & Amortization Expense	$ 351,411
Professional Fees	$ 230,401
Lease Costs	$ 201,266
Local Transportation	$ 179,221
Insurance	$ 178,807
Miscellaneous	$ 39,367
Aid to Individuals	$ 91,207
Interest Expense	$ 82,962
Operating Lease	$ 201,266
Total Expense	16,112,882

PDCA FY 2025 - PLAN







Cash on Hand

Listening Ear has immediate unrestricted cash reserves of $2.8 million, which represents 2.07 months of operating expenses. The agency could operate for 2 months if all funding sources suddenly ceased. Beyond immediate cash on hand, the agency holds several endowments at the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation totaling $2.8 million, with $1.0 million of that designated as spendable by the MPACF trustees.

Challenges

Staffing continues to be a challenge for the Agency for all position but most prounced in direct service professional roles. The State of Michigan continues to provide and honor the pass through additions to DSP wages of prior years equaling a $3.40 increase in wages. However rates are still unable to create the applicant pool we seek. This is true for all providers in our industry as well as other industries and markets.

Technology costs continue to rise, both hardware and expertise. Contract requirements, such as certain background checks required every 30 days, require the Agency to explore automated systems rather than completing them in house. This adds another layer of cost that fund sources do not recognize as increasing contract revenue needs.

Continuing increases in costs of health care, food items, and household goods represents a large challenge, not only for the agency, but for our consumers and staff as well. These rising costs, not being compensated wholly through funding sources, puts strain on our staff and the Agency.

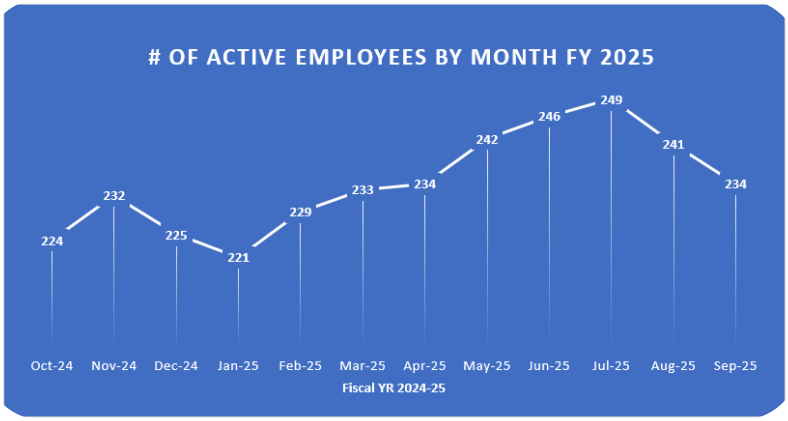
Finally, the agency depends on government funding for almost all of its programs, either through direct grants or fee for service services. Though a lot of early funding uncertainly seems to have abated, is is far from certain what the future outlook is for this funding streams. We continue to be vigilant and look for ways to diversify our funding streams

PDCA FY 2025 - PLAN

Personnel

Staffing increased by 4.6% in FY 2025, reflecting the early impact of workforce initiatives aligned with COA standards for supervision, performance evaluation, and employee development, including:

- Implementation of an online performance evaluation system grounded in position-specific competencies identified by department leadership. The system incorporates employee self-assessment and supports ongoing, meaningful supervision and professional development.
- Launch of a revised New Employee Orientation that strengthens onboarding by providing staff with a clear understanding of Listening Ear's organizational structure, services, workplace culture, key employment policies, and available supports essential to successful job performance.









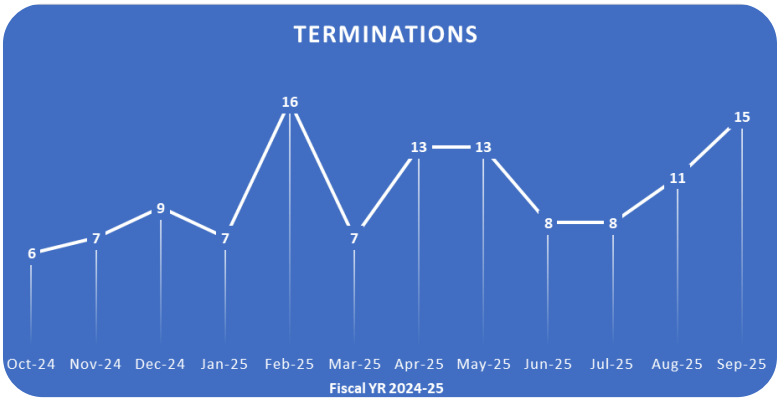
While hiring remains cyclical, Listening Ear experienced a measurable increase in employment applications during FY 2025, reflecting recruitment strategies aligned with COA workforce standards related to recruitment, outreach, and equitable access to employment opportunities, including:

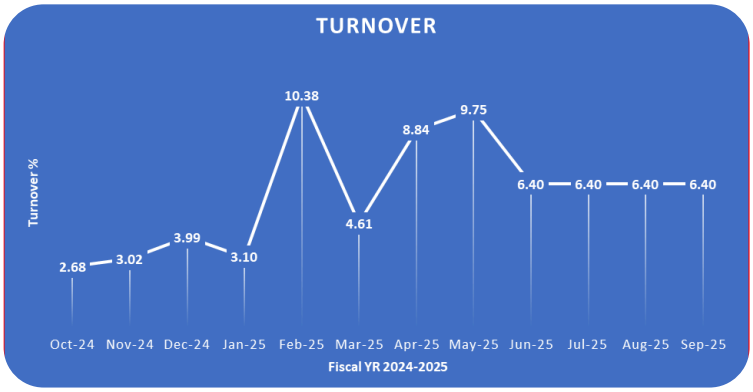
- Strengthened partnerships with regional MichiganWorks offices, including increased visibility through featured job postings on MichiganWorks job boards.
- Expanded recruitment efforts within higher education and career pathways through participation in on-campus job boards and renewed relationships with academic departments, extending outreach beyond Central Michigan University and Mid-Michigan College to Ferris State University, Montcalm Community College, and Northwest Education Services Career Tech Center in Antrim County.
- Improved applicant access through the use of QR-coded business cards and recruitment fliers linking directly to current job openings and the online application process.
- Targeted updates to the Listening Ear website to streamline navigation to the job board and online application links, reducing barriers for prospective applicants.

PDCA FY 2025 - PLAN

Employee turnover for FY 2025 increased slightly to 51%, prompting enhanced workforce analysis and quality improvement efforts aligned with COA standards related to supervision, personnel practices, and organizational accountability, including:

- Implementation of a more detailed review of termination data to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary separations.
- Adoption of a pre-termination Human Resources review process for all proposed involuntary terminations to ensure consistency, fairness, and compliance with personnel policies.
- Systematic assessment of the underlying reasons for involuntary separations to inform supervisory practice and corrective action.
- Expansion of exit interview practices, as employee availability allows, to better understand factors influencing voluntary turnover.
- Planned implementation in FY 2026 of structured Stay Interviews at 30-day, 60-day, and one-year employment milestones to strengthen retention, engagement, and early intervention.





Infrastructure

Over the past year, Listening Ear continues to see positive results from some decision made the prior year while other are being reassessed:

- The managed service contract with KR Group continues to be a cornerstone of our IT strategy. They have proven competent, engaging, and professional.
- The usage of Zoom for our phone system has been a successful process. We will be looking at expanding zoom phone from just the office to all AFC homes as well.
- Zoom rooms have been installed in 2 locations and proven very useful. Further potential Zoom rooms will be identified.
- The switch to Five9 in the crisis call center has given a more stable and user friendly experience to agency staff and callers.
- The Patagonia EHR continues to be underutilized within the agency and is being re-evaluated as a solutions to health records and medical billing.

PDCA FY 2025 - PLAN

Risk Management Evaluation

As in previous years, the Risk and Safety Team completed the annual Risk Management Evaluation using a standardized template. This review included internal audits of consumer records, facilities, and personnel files. Findings were presented to the Management Team and Board of Directors. Our Manual of Operations (MOP) continues to serve as the foundation for agency procedures, though several areas identified for improvement in 2024 remain in progress during 2025. The two major achievements from these efforts stand out as Workplace Safety and Visitor Protocols, and Compensation and Benefits Review

Workplace Safety and Visitor Protocols

Recognizing the need for stronger workplace violence prevention measures and consistent visitor check-in procedures, Listening Ear convened a temporary safety committee in 2025. This group analyzed existing policies, identified gaps, and developed revised safety protocols. These updates will be incorporated into the updated Manual of Operations, scheduled for release in 2026. The changes aim to create a safer environment for staff and consumers while ensuring compliance across all locations.

Compensation and Benefits Review

To address concerns about fairness in compensation and benefits, the agency conducted a comprehensive pay structure analysis and gathered employee feedback through surveys. Based on these findings:

- A 403(b) retirement program will launch in January 2026.
- A formal wage structure was developed for all positions, ensuring consistency and equity.
- Employees identified as under-compensated received salary adjustments to align with the new structure.

Guiding & Analyzing Risk Yearly (GARY)

GARY aggregates data from quarterly risk reports to create Key Risk Indicators (KRIs) across all departments. This process helps identify trends, support annual planning, and prioritize KRIs for assessment. Built in mid-2025, GARY is still evolving, but data from FY 2024–2025 has been uploaded and analyzed.



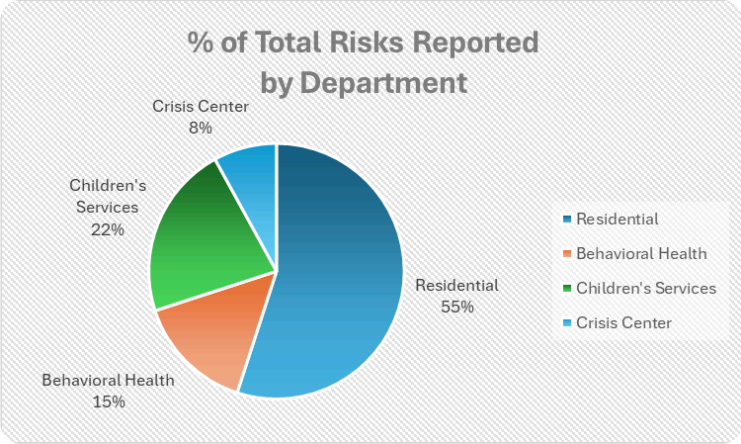
PDCA FY 2025 - PLAN

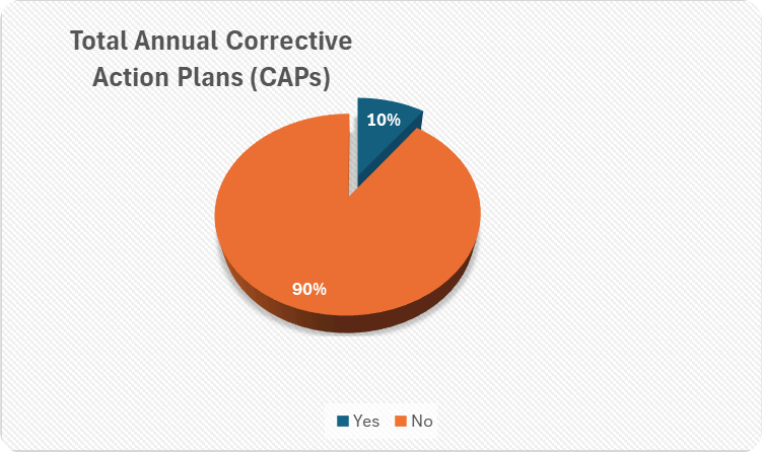


2025 Risk Data Highlights

- Total identified risks: 189
- Corrective Action Plans (CAPs): 4
- Residential department: 55% of all risks (expected due to size and scope)
- Common risk categories: Medication Errors, Falls, Recipient Rights
- Foster Care and Residential programs share responsibility for compliance, including managing multiple licensing renewals.
- The Crisis Center currently reports only calls that escalate to a governing authority or involve imminent risk to self or others, rather than all incoming calls.







Although historical data is limited, we are on an upward trajectory in data collection, enabling more comprehensive analysis in future years.

Key Trends and Immediate Actions

- One significant trend identified in 2025 involved van safety training. Three major incidents occurred due to improper care during consumer loading and unloading. A review of policies revealed a gap: hands-on training was only provided at hire, with annual refreshers limited to written tests.

Action Taken

- Implemented mandatory hands-on physical training during annual evaluations for all employees, regardless of tenure.

Looking Ahead

Listening Ear remains committed to strengthening risk management and CQI processes. With tools like GARY and updated protocols, we are building a safer, more transparent, and equitable environment for staff and consumers.

Identifying Agency Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/ Threats

Listening Ear incorporates SWOT analysis as a core component of its Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to systematically evaluate internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. This approach informs strategic planning and supports improvement initiatives that are data-driven, effective, and sustainable. Integrating SWOT analysis into CQI strengthens organizational decision-making and aligns with COA standards for ongoing performance evaluation and continuous organizational growth.

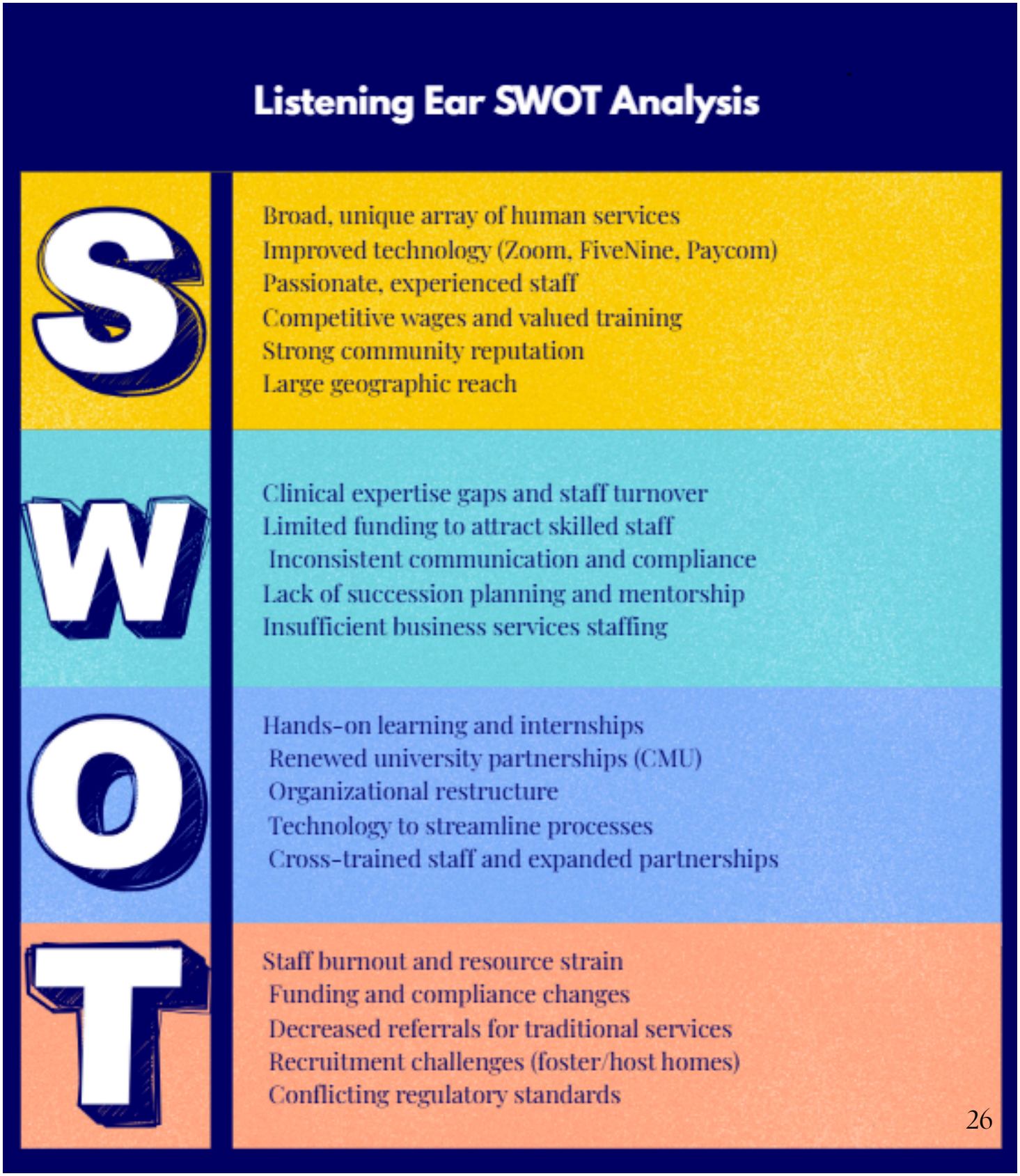
Potential Barriers and Roadblocks

Based on the SWOT analysis, the agency has identified several potential barriers that may impact service delivery and organizational effectiveness. These include workforce burnout, turnover among experienced and clinical staff, limited funding to support specialized roles, inconsistent communication practices, gaps in succession planning, and operational challenges related to regulatory complexity and resource constraints. External factors—such as funding variability, shifting referral patterns, and challenges in securing foster and host homes—also present ongoing risks.

In response, Listening Ear is proactively addressing these challenges through strategic planning, leadership and organizational restructuring, expanded training and mentorship opportunities, enhanced use of technology, strengthened community partnerships, and a continued focus on performance monitoring and quality improvement. These efforts reflect the agency's commitment to continuous improvement, staff support, and the delivery of high-quality, compliant, and sustainable services.

PDCA FY 2025 - PLAN

The following illustration summarizes Listening Ear's SWOT analysis for FY 2025–2026.



PDCA FY 2025 - DO

During the DO phase, Listening Ear implements programs and services consistent with Council on Accreditation (COA) standards, emphasizing consumer-centered care and measurable outcomes. Data and consumer feedback are continuously collected to support quality improvement, performance benchmarks, and service effectiveness. Consumer success stories and quality -of- life indicators are used to demonstrate improvements in overall program and/or service impact.

Affordable Housing

Rental Properties

Listening Ear provides affordable rental housing for individuals and families classified as Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed (ALICE). These households often face challenges meeting basic needs such as housing, childcare, food, transportation, healthcare, and technology. The agency manages 23 single-family homes and duplexes throughout Mt. Pleasant, as well as three apartment complexes housing a total of 142 families. These properties are intended to offer stable and affordable housing options to support the financial security of local residents.

In 2025, Affordable Housing sustained 144 safe, stable, and affordable units serving ALICE individuals and families in Isabella County, maintaining strong occupancy despite limited housing availability. The program housed 13 new ALICE families and welcomed 9 new voucher households, even as statewide voucher issuance paused and waitlists remained closed. By maintaining affordable rent levels, the program continued to reduce barriers for low-income residents and support access to essential needs such as childcare, food, transportation, and healthcare. To promote inclusive housing and support aging in place, we implemented a targeted, tenant-centered process for identifying and addressing ADA needs for current residents. CQI efforts also focused on safety and asset protection, including installation of environmental tracking sensors that prevented a frozen pipe and mitigated additional water-damage risks, alongside development of 3- and 5-year capital improvement plans prioritizing critical safety upgrades and family-focused community enhancements.

210
Individuals & Families Served

144
Affordable Housing Units Maintained

95.8 %
Occupancy Rate

93%
Consumer Satisfaction

PDCA FY 2025 - DO

Consumer Highlight

A Chance to Rebuild

After job loss and unexpected expenses left Maria far behind on rent, she faced eviction from the affordable housing unit she shared with her young son.
Instead of applying a standard repayment plan, we partnered with her to create a longer, realistic path forward. Maria honored that agreement, regained employment, and restored stability for her family.
Today, her son is thriving — and Maria approaches challenges with confidence and early communication.
Supportive housing isn't just about a roof. It's about giving families the tools to rebuild, stabilize, and grow.

Behavioral Health Services

Crisis Center

This program provides 24-hour telephone, text, and chat messaging crisis support for any individual experiencing a mental health or basic needs crisis. Mental Health Technicians and trained Volunteers are available to provide crisis intervention, emotional support, information, and basic needs referrals. The goal of the program is to ensure safety and support people's strengths and decisions as they work through the crisis.

The Crisis Center advanced CQI efforts by assessing and strengthening onboarding practices to ensure staff competencies, clearly defined expectations, and alignment with COA standards and best practices. Systems were enhanced to support quality assurance, including implementation of structured staff feedback processes, improved data collection and reporting for crisis interventions, and progress toward a caller feedback system to inform service improvement. The Center also strengthened compliance and service coordination through targeted community partnerships addressing emergency shelter and basic-needs access, while clarifying its role as a central hub for emergency financial assistance. Efforts were made to improve education, outreach, and processing of LEAF funds. Operational improvements, including expanded remote work options and phased implementation of digital service platforms, further supported consistent, accessible, and standards-aligned service delivery.

29,084
Crisis Calls Received

$16,096
L.E.A.F Funds Distributed

100%
Consumer Satisfaction

PDCA FY 2025 - DO

Consumer Highlight

Sustained Support, Lasting Change

For more than five years, an older adult in our community has regularly reached out to the Listening Ear Crisis Line. In the early years, her calls were marked by deep emotional distress and feelings of hopelessness.

Today, her calls look very different.

She now checks in to ask about the weather or share light conversation. What was once crisis-driven has become connection-driven. Her journey reflects the power of consistent, compassionate support — and how steady access to care can help individuals gradually de-escalate and build resilience over time.

Child Sexual Abuse Treatment (CSATP)/General Counseling

CSTAP provides individual, family, and group counseling for children aged 3-17 years old who have been victims of sexual abuse. These services include assessment, consultation, counseling, emotional support, and referral for the children and their families.General Counseling provides individual, family, and/ or group therapy for children or adults to address issues related to trauma and/or ongoing mental health symptoms.

During the year, Behavioral Health Services significantly strengthened staff competency in evidence-based practices by updating training protocols, delivering a new training module to 100% of staff, and achieving an average 80% improvement in competency scores through pre- and post-assessments. Program manuals were updated to fully integrate Electronic Health Record (EHR) procedures, resulting in 100% staff completion of required reviews, improved documentation accuracy, and greater operational efficiency. Planned initiatives to expand insurance billing capacity and hire an additional licensed counselor were paused due to ongoing NPI2 credentialing barriers and will carry forward into FY2026. Overall, CQI efforts reinforced service quality, compliance, and workforce readiness while identifying system-level barriers requiring continued focus.

25
Total Youth Served

583
of Counseling Hours Provided

92 %
Youth Improved Behavior at School

94.7%
Consumer Satisfaction

PDCA FY 2025 - DO

Consumer Highlight

Healing and Growth

Rhonda began services after experiencing sexual assault by a family member. Through Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), she courageously addressed the trauma that brought her to us. Over time, Rhonda not only processed her experience but strengthened every area of her life. She maintained and improved her school performance, continued playing softball, kept her job, and rebuilt her relationship with her mother through counseling.

Her journey reflects the power of trauma-informed care — and the resilience that emerges when young people are given the space, tools, and support to heal.

Runaway & Homeless Youth Program (RHYP)

This program provides temporary, safe housing, case management, and counseling services for youth ages 12 to 17 who are thinking about or who have run away, are homeless, or have been removed by their family or other entity. These services focus on providing immediate resources to prevent ongoing homelessness and support while the youth works towards independence.

106
Total Served (106 Crisis Intervention, 20 inakes)

100 %
Youth now Living in a Safe Place

75 %
Youth Working/Attending School

94%
Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer Highlight

Rapid Intervention, Restored Stability

After her legal guardian passed away, a young person in our community was left living alone in a home without heat and without legal rights to remain there. As winter approached, she was at serious risk of homelessness.

When Child Protective Services contacted our crisis line, our team acted immediately. Within hours, we coordinated consents, secured safe placement in a host home, and ensured she had stable shelter that very night.

Over the next two weeks in our RHYP program, we provided wraparound support while collaborating closely with CPS and her family. She was ultimately reunified with her biological father, re-enrolled in school, and strengthened family communication.

Today, she has successfully completed the program and is on a path toward long-term stability.

PDCA FY 2025 - DO

Transitional Living Program (TLP)

This program provides education and case management services for youth ages 16-21 who are experiencing homelessness. Youth in this program may be dealing with poverty, estrangement from their families, and/or untreated mental health issues. The program helps them with housing, transportation, education, community access, job, and life skills training. Youth are supported while they work to achieve personal goals and independence.

Youth Services advanced multiple CQI initiatives in FY25, including the development of comprehensive onboarding and training modules with a formal mentoring program to enhance staff competency. The program expanded licensed foster and independent living homes to increase placement capacity for youth aged 12-21, while maintaining rigorous certification and case management standards. Program manuals were reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with grants and contracts, youth engagement was strengthened through YETI group activities focused on advocacy, and staff participated in the National Conference hosted by the Family and Youth Service Bureau to network with peers, learn best practices, and advocate for needed changes. Despite ongoing challenges such as staffing turnover, referral complexities, and limited housing availability, continued outreach, partnership development, and targeted training efforts supported service quality and positioned the program for sustainable growth.

106
Total Served (106 Crisis Intervention, 20 inakes)

100 %
Youth now Living in a Safe Place

75 %
Youth Working/Attending School

94%
Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer Highlight

A Future Rewritten

After entering RHYP at 17 during a family crisis, this young person faced abandonment and lived with an undiagnosed disability.
With consistent support, he transitioned to our TLP program, achieved 80% of his goals, graduated high school, and was accepted into college. He learned to navigate public transit, communicate independently, volunteer, and secure employment.
Once considered unlikely to live independently, he is now building a confident, stable future.

Prevention Demonstration Program (PDP)

In 2024, Listening Ear received a federal grant to provide PDP services. The Prevention Demonstration Program (PDP) supports youth ages 12–21 and their families in Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, and limited surrounding counties by providing short-term case management and flexible financial assistance to prevent homelessness. The program focuses on early intervention, addressing risks across housing, income, education, health, and family relationships, with referrals initiated through Listening Ear's crisis line. All services are voluntary, time-limited, and grounded in youth-centered, strengths-based, trauma-informed practices.

During FY 2024–2025, the Prevention Demonstration Program (PDP) focused on supporting youth ages 12–21 and their families facing housing instability through early, prevention-based services. Phase I centered on collaborative program planning and design with community partners and the agency's Youth Advisory Board, which meets twice monthly to ensure youth and family voice informed program development. Phase II began in August 2025, when PDP launched direct services and community outreach, focusing on building strong connections with community partners while providing coordinated support, case management, and flexible assistance to help stabilize housing and strengthen youth and family stability. Throughout the remainder of Quarter 4 FY 24-25 PDP focused on establishing data tracking and reporting tools.

Child & Family Services

Children's Foster Care (CFC)

The Child Foster Care program provides temporary, emergency, and long-term family-based care for children and youth ages 0–17 whose family of origin cannot support them due to developmental, medical, or mental health needs. Licensed, through the State of Michigan, Foster Care Providers offer care in natural family settings, supported by experienced caseworkers who provide year-round case management, supervision, and coordination of services. The program collaborates with referring agencies, including Community Mental Health/s, the Department of Health and Human Services, and various court systems.

During the year, we strengthened referral engagement, maintained bed capacity, and implemented consistent quarterly reviews and contacts with youth, families, and foster parents. Despite staffing disruptions in October that temporarily reduced capacity, we revised onboarding processes, added a licensed position, and restored capacity to serve up to 20 youth by year's end. We enhanced recruitment and retention through a new regional strategy developed in collaboration with CMU students, supported by increased community outreach and updated program manuals. Ongoing collaboration with community mental health partners and development of the TFCO model further improved service coordination and placement readiness.

PDCA FY 2025 - DO

25
Youth Served

15
Counties

100 %
Youth Enrolled in School, Work, or Training

100%
Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer Highlight

From Disruption to Stability

After 19 placement disruptions, Brooklyn entered our program at age 16 significantly behind in school and facing complex challenges.
With a stable foster placement and coordinated support, she completed 34 high school credits in one year and graduated on time. She has since secured employment, transitioned to independent housing, and maintains a positive, supportive relationship with her foster parents.
Stability changed her trajectory — and created a path toward lasting independence.

Residential and Community Living Services

Adult Foster Care

The Adult Foster Care Program provides 24-hour residential supports for adults with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, and/or mental illness in homes licensed by the State of Michigan. Services are delivered in accordance with Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) principles, promoting independence, choice, dignity, and community inclusion.

In-Home Help (Community Living Supports – CLS)

Our Community Living Supports (CLS) program provides individualized, in-home and community-based assistance for children, youth, and adults with developmental, physical, and mental health support needs. Services are designed in alignment with Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) rules, promoting choice, independence, dignity, and full community inclusion.

PDCA FY 2025 - DO

Listening Ear Activities (LEA)

The Listening Ear Activities (LEA) program is part of the Community Living Supports (CLS) program, offering participants fun and engaging opportunities to explore their communities through a variety of recreational and leisure activities. Focused on building and maintaining skills in socialization, safety, independence, and community navigation, LEA empowers individuals to connect, grow, and enjoy meaningful experiences in a supportive environment. The LEA Program offered 327 total events across 4 counties during this review period.

The Residential and CLS Team advanced several COA-aligned practices by strengthening retention and employee experience through enhanced DSP and mentoring training, improved onboarding, and CQI-driven updates to mentoring tools. Consumer and guardian engagement efforts shifted from biannual forums to annual multi-platform surveys, with compiled satisfaction data supporting ongoing CQI review. Staff morale initiatives continued through team-building, expanded Paycom feedback, and exploration of sustainable recognition strategies, while communication practices improved through Outlook and Teams training. DSP training enhancements informed by CMH partners, along with increased CLS utilization supported by updated schedules and recruitment, further strengthened service quality.

176
Consumers Served (AFC/CLS)

82 %
Consumers Improved or Maintained their Functioning

65 %
Residential Community Participation at least 2 times/week

79%
Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer Highlight

Residential

Through collaboration with community partners, a consumer received a custom wheelchair, greatly improving mobility, safety, and quality of life. Residential services also expanded transportation capacity with the purchase of new vans, increasing safe community access.

IHH (In Home Help)

With dedicated support from Listening Ear and MMI staff, a consumer built the skills necessary to secure independent employment, achieving greater confidence and self-sufficiency.

LEA (Listening Ear Activities)

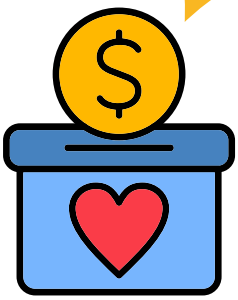
After experiencing isolation following graduation, a consumer reconnected socially through LEA, building friendships and strengthening life skills in a supportive, engaging environment.

Community Support & Impact Initiatives

At Listening Ear, we understand that stability is built not only through structured programs, but through timely acts of support that restore hope and remove unexpected barriers. These initiatives address immediate financial barriers and individualized quality-of-life needs that, if unmet, could undermine program outcomes and long-term stability. Made possible through the generosity of community members and partners, these initiatives ensure that no moment of crisis — or opportunity or growth — goes unanswered.

Listening Ear Assistance Fund (L.E.A.F)

$16,096
TOTAL FUNDS DISTRIBUTED IN 2025



The Listening Ear Assistance Fund (LEAF) serves as the organization's primary short-term financial stabilization resource, providing timely support when immediate economic barriers threaten consumer safety and continuity of care. When an unexpected hardship threatens someone's stability, LEAF provides immediate, compassionate assistance. Whether helping with utilities, transportation, or emergency shelter, LEAF bridges critical gaps so temporary setbacks do not become long-term crises. Funded entirely by local generosity, LEAF represents neighbors helping neighbors in moments that matter most.

Needs and Dreams Fund

$7693
TOTAL FUNDS DISTRIBUTED IN 2025

While LEAF focuses on immediate financial stabilization, the Needs & Dreams Fund extends support beyond crisis intervention by addressing individualized goals and quality-of-life needs not covered through program funding. Inspired by the individuals we serve, their guardians, and our staff, the Needs & Dreams Fund was created to ensure that those we serve have opportunities not only to stabilize—but to thrive. Established through the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation, this endowed fund supports unmet needs such as medical or dental care, adaptive equipment, and resources that open doors to employment, education, and community connection. By investing in both essential needs and personal aspirations, Needs & Dreams affirms that every individual deserves dignity, opportunity, and a meaningful place in our community.



PDCA FY 2025 - CHECK

During the CHECK phase, Listening Ear monitors service delivery to ensure alignment with objectives and COA standards. This includes case record reviews, Quarterly CQI and Risk Management reports, and evaluation by standing and ad hoc committees to identify trends, risks, and improvement opportunities. External reviews—such as licensing audits, provider site reviews, and contract audits—inform the Corrective Action Process. Key data on consumer outcomes, safety, staffing, and finances are analyzed by leadership, with quarterly performance reports provided to the Board of Directors to support accountability and continuous quality improvement.



Standing COA Committees
Training and Ethics
Recruitment and Retention
Risk and Safety
Consumer Advocacy & Engagement
Youth Advisory Board

Temporary Workgroups
Safety Subcommittee
Residential On-Call Committee

CQI Working Committees
Team Phoniex
Medical Safety
Maintenance
Policy Review,
Residential Improvement Committee (RIC)
Wellness Committee

PDCA FY 2025 - ACT

In the ACT phase, Listening Ear establishes clear, actionable goals to support sustainable improvement through the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process. Long-term strategic planning provides organizational direction and alignment with mission and COA standards, while short-term annual goals translate priorities into measurable actions. Ongoing monitoring and adjustment ensure effective decision-making, responsible use of resources, and continuous improvement.

Board of Directors' Strategic Plan FY 2023-2026: The strategic plan is on a 4-year cycle and is established by the Listening Ear Board of Directors. It is one of the foundational documents guiding the development of the annual tactical plan. Management develops annual goals to support the strategic plan set by the Board. The Chief Executive Officer provides the Strategic Plan's semiannual progress reports to the Board of Directors. The current strategic plan cycle ends on September 30, 2026 (see attached for the full Board Strategic Plan document).



PDCA FY 2025 - ACT

Strategic Priorities FY 2023-2026

Listening Ear Crisis Center is committed to guiding community growth, achieving service excellence, and enhancing our impact through strategic priorities for FY 2023–2026.

1 Strengthen & Grow Core Programs

- Expand and sustain core services to meet increasing community demand
- Increase consumers served, diversify funding sources, and grow operating budget

2 Deliver Service Excellence

- Achieve or exceed customer satisfaction requirements and benchmarks
- Demonstrate continuous improvement through CQI processes

3 Expand Fund Development

- Increase fund development revenue (target growth over time)
- Grow and diversify donor base

4 Increase Affordable Housing

- Expand access to stable housing across Mid & Northern Michigan
- Add at least 8 new affordable housing units

5 Build Community Partnerships

- Develop collaborative partnerships to address shared unmet needs
- Launch at least one new cross-sector initiative

6 Ensure Crisis Services Stability

- Maintain a fully funded and fiscally stable 24-hour Crisis Center.
- Strengthen responsiveness to evolving community needs.

7 Foster a Healthy Workplace Culture

- Improve staff retention, confidence, and job satisfaction.
- Advance quality outcomes through a supportive work environment.

LISTENING EAR... ALWAYS There!

LISTENING, CONNECTING, SUPPORTING, 24 HOURS EVERYDAY.

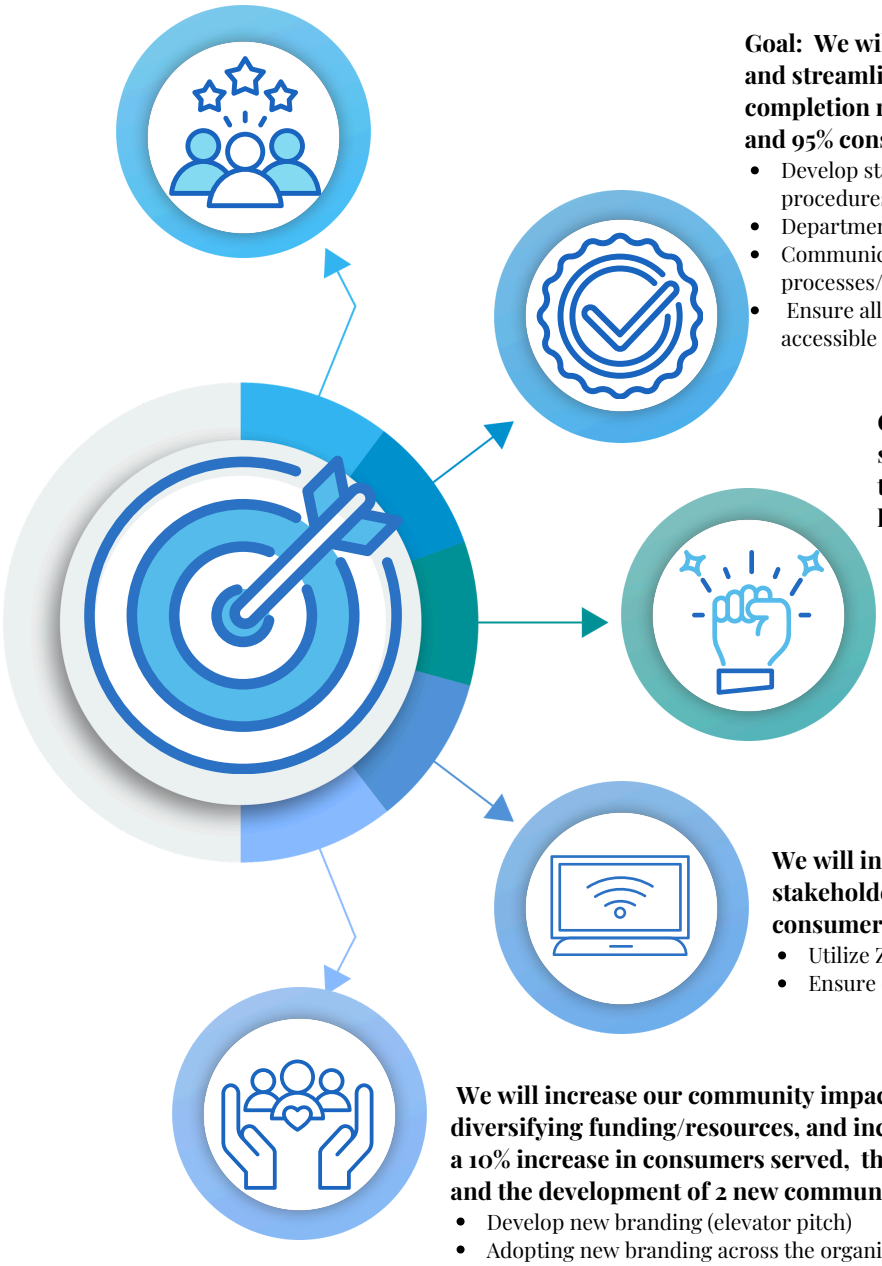
AGENCY TACTICAL PLAN FY 26

Agency Tactical Plan FY 26:

The annual goals are developed each year by the management team to move the agency towards the strategic goals identified by the board of directors. Agency Directors report quarterly progress and potential roadblocks to the CQI Committee, who in turn provides oversight and feedback for needed adjustments to the plan. The Chief Executive Director provides quarterly updates to the Board of Directors.

Goal: We will increase and empower our workforce by reducing overall employee turnover to 60% (averaging no more than 5% per month) while simultaneously increasing staff satisfaction scores to at least 3.5, as measured by the annual staff survey.

- Identify a Leadership Curriculum that is of a coaching nature by end of Q1 2026
- Ensure all Leadership has completed training by End of Year
- Develop, Document and Implement Performance Appraisal Process by end of first quarter
- Develop and document a systematic wage analysis for identified positions, and formalize the agency's wage structure to ensure wages are competitive and applied consistently across staff.



Goal: We will increase quality services and system outcomes by updating and streamlining agency processes and procedures, with a minimum completion rate of 85% on all identified Standard Operating Procedures and 95% consumer goal completion.

- Develop standardized formatting and language for docuemnting processes and procedures
- Departments to identify what their key processes and procedures are
- Communicate and train leadership on standardized tool for documenting processes/procedures
- Ensure all identified policies and procedures are fully documented and easily accessible to staff

Goal: We will empower staff by providing consistent, streamlined, and well-documented onboarding processes tracked across all departments for 100% of new employees hired in Q4 2026

- Standardize Onboarding Framework
- Departments will be trained on the tool
- Depts will input their onboarding process into tool which must get approval from HR.
- Implement documented onboarding processes for all new hires in Q4 26
- Review and revise required initial and ongoing trainings in Paycom. Framework of what's required due by 1/31/26

We will increase quality outcomes for consumers, staff, and stakeholders by maximizing current technology, as evidenced by consumer, staff, and stakeholder satisfaction scores of 3.5 or greater.

- Utilize Zoom for chat, dept & team communication log, project management
- Ensure current technology adheres to current listening ear policies

We will increase our community impact by maximizing and expanding services, diversifying funding/resources, and increasing community partnerships, as evidenced by a 10% increase in consumers served, the addition of three new funding sources/donors, and the development of 2 new community partnerships.

- Develop new branding (elevator pitch)
- Adopting new branding across the organization
- Radio advertisement including 2 months of digital

PDCA FY 2025 - ACT

Corrective Action Plans

Corrective action plans are essential to the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process. They fit into the CQI framework by providing a structured approach to addressing identified issues. Initially, areas needing improvement are pinpointed, and a corrective action plan is developed to tackle these problems. The plan is then implemented, and its effectiveness is monitored and evaluated through data review and audits. Based on the evaluation, necessary adjustments are made to the plan. If successful, the improvements are standardized; if not, the plan is refined, and the cycle continues. This systematic approach ensures ongoing improvement and enhances overall service quality.

The following Corrective Action Plans were implemented this year.

The Child Welfare Licensing Management (CWLM) audit was completed in March. There were no health and safety deficiencies noted. Serval documentation errors were noted. It was determined that these were a result of changing requirements and staff turnover. The corrective action plan included additional chart audit and tracking forms to be completed by program supervisors.

Two licensing audits within the Residential program resulted in citations. These citations included Resident Protection, Resident Rights and Licensees Responsibilities. The citations did not impact the license status and s were resolved through standard operating procedures.





PDCA FY 2025 - ACT

Corrective Action Plans FY 2025

Area	Routine Actions	Corrective Actions
Residential Program	Regular Audits & Renewals Site Visits in Compliance	Mt. Pleasant home behavior plan Multiple homes' corrective action plans
Foster Care	Regular Audits (CWLM, MDHHS) Zero-citation Evaluations	Staff termination for unprofessional conduct Retraining for case management
Licensing	Regular Renewal and Site Visits	Specific CAPs for Isabella, Broadway, Mt. Pleasant, North Birch, Shepherd, and Spring Street
Financial	External & SSA Audits Completed	None required at this time
Youth Service	Desk Audit Completed	Corrective actions implemented for 6 non-compliance areas
System Wide	Ongoing monitoring (AIMS, guardian signatures, health checks)	Corrective Action plans being finalized for each area

Dissemination of This Report

To effectively solicit feedback, this Annual Report and Tactical plan will be distributed to various stakeholders, including the Listening Ear Board of Directors, Listening Ear Management and Employees, and funders such as Community Mental Health boards. Additionally, the report will be shared with Listening Ear consumers and their families, as well as other relevant parties as determined by the Board of Directors. This distribution will occur, in part, through agency newsletter articles and website updates, ensuring that consumers, families, funders, and community partners are kept informed and engaged in the feedback process. This comprehensive approach ensures that all key stakeholders can consistently provide valuable input, enhancing the overall quality and effectiveness of services.

CONTACT US





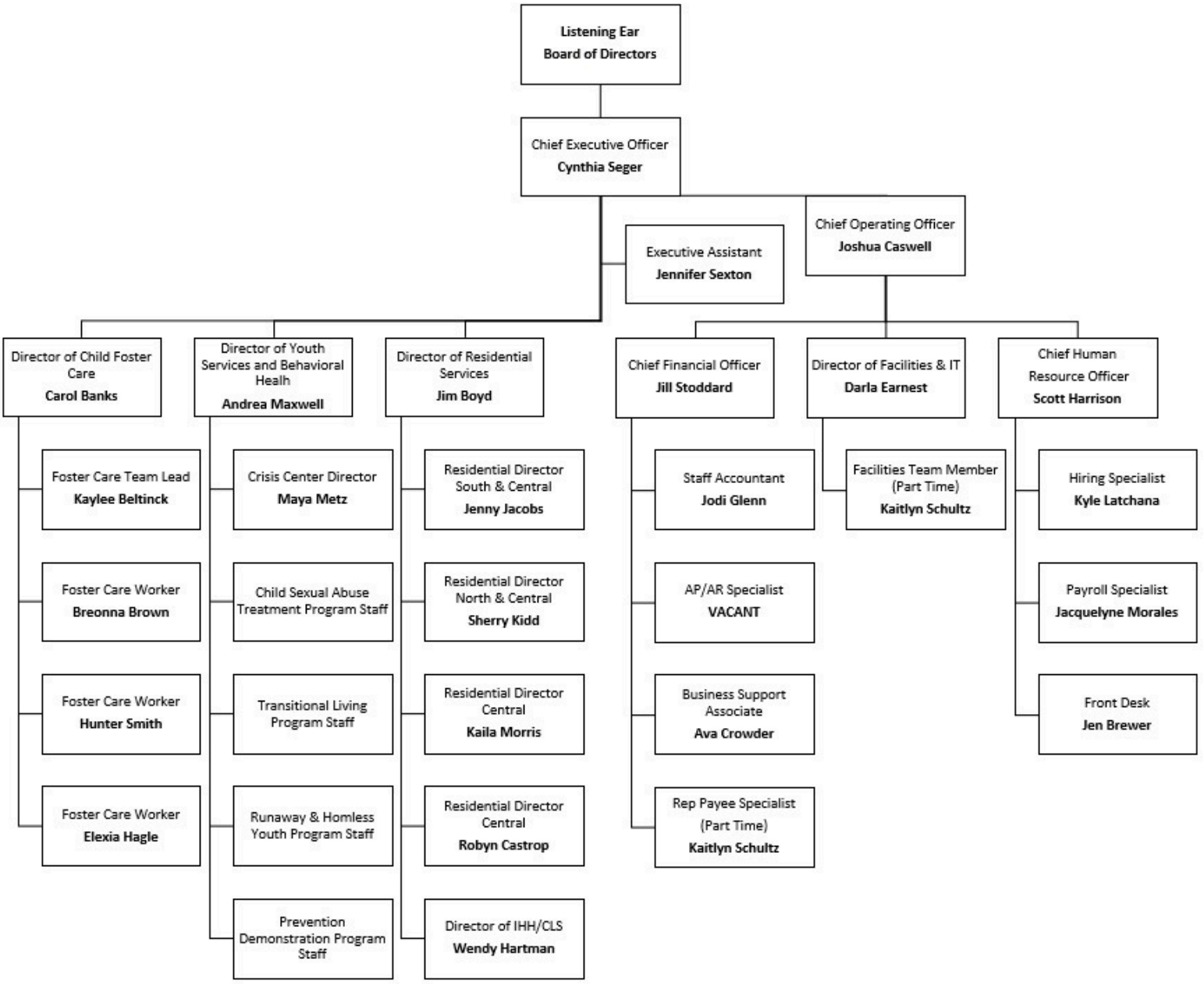
Listening Ear Crisis Center

Always There

Addendum

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Listening Ear Organizational Chart



Programs, Services, & Service Populations

Affordable Housing
Darla Earnest - Director of Facilities

Service Description

Listening Ear offers affordable housing rentals for individuals and families categorized as ALICE households. The ALICE acronym stands for
Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed and represents the growing number of families who are unable to afford the basics of housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, and technology. Our services aim to help those who struggle to keep their own households from financial ruin while keeping our local communities running. In Mt. Pleasant, we have 23 single-family homes and duplexes scattered throughout the city. In addition, we own and manage three apartment complexes, totaling 142 families thriving in a Listening Ear rental unit.

Behavioral Health Services
Andrea Maxwell - Director of Behavioral Health Services

Child Sexual Assault Treatment Program

Service Description

The Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program's philosophy and approach is to address child-centered concerns and problems and works with the child and the child's family. The focus is on the strengths of the child and family. Implicit in the strength-based approach is a recognition that the solution to these concerns and problems do not reside in the therapist but in the family and the relationship between the therapist and the family. Best practices will include evidence-based interventions and a partnership with the family with a belief that all participants, not just the therapist, have valuable assets to contribute to the helping relationship. Time-limited individual, family, and group counseling is available to residents within the service area. Using a person-centered approach, the program is respectful of socio-cultural values and considers the personal goals and lifestyle choices of the individuals. Some specific services offered are Counseling, Family Counseling, Crisis Management, Support during Legal Process, and Referrals to Community Resources.

Children & Family Services
Carol Banks - Director of Children and Family Services

Children's Foster Care
Kaylee Beltinck - Foster Care Supervisor

Service Description

The Child Foster Care program is uniquely designed to serve youth in Michigan who require short- or long-term care in a family setting. Experienced Foster Care Workers are teamed with highly trained, experienced, and licensed Foster Parent families to provide case management and family home care year-round. The Child Foster Care program also provides case consultation, management, and supervision services to referring agencies such as Community Mental Health, Department of Health and Human Service agencies, and Courts. Child Foster Care comprehensive services include youth and family-centered planning, placement, assessment, Foster Parent training, and access to a full array of medical, mental health, physical therapy, and other services. In addition, the program coordinates all services and offers concurrent and permanency planning, referrals to specialized services such as counseling, parenting classes, etc., and maintains files with pertinent & required information. Although licensed to serve children ages 0–17, the focus of the program is to assist older youth ages 10-17.

Runaway/Homeless Youth Program
Shelby Flores - RHY Supervisor

Service Description

The Runaway & Homeless Youth Program (RHYP) is designed to promote successful resolutions of conflict and prevent homelessness. The purpose of RHYP is to alleviate problems of runaway, homelessness, and youth at-risk, to reunite youth with their families and encourage the resolution of interfamily problems through case management and other support services, strengthen family relationships and encourage stable living conditions for youth, and help youth decide upon constructive courses of action. The primary goal is to reunite families whenever that is safely possible. When returning home is not in the best interest of the youth, assistance in locating alternative living situations is provided. The program is available to young people 12 to 17 years old and their families, who are in the Listening Ear service area of Clare, Isabella, and Gladwin Counties, the eastern portion of Montcalm and Mecosta Counties, the northern area of Gratiot County, and surrounding areas including the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe. Services are available to youth who have run away, are thinking of running away, have been abandoned, and/or are homeless.

Transistional Living Program

Shelby Flores - TLP Supervisor

Service Description

The Transitional Living Program (TLP) is designed to build a trusting relationship with older homeless youth, provide education, support, and assistance in locating employment, protect youth, and move from vulnerable or dangerous living situations to safe environments. The services strive to increase “protective” factors such as positive adult guidance, provide opportunities and education to build skills and competencies as they transition to independence, and offer 24-hour access to crisis intervention and alternatives to unsafe living situations. The Transitional Living Program will focus on older youth who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness (including pregnant and parenting teens) ages 16 to under 22, located in an area that includes all of Clare, Gladwin, and Isabella Counties, including the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal reserve and their surrounding townships.

Crisis Center/2-1-1 Call Center

Nikki Crouse - Crisis Center Director

Service Description

The primary service area for information and referral and crisis callers is Isabella and Clare Counties, however, calls are received from many localities. People calling for information and referral services include professionals from other helping agencies, seeking specialized referrals for their consumers, as well as the general public. 2-1-1 is the international 3-digit, easy-to-remember number to access information about human service resources. Listening Ear is the 2-1-1 call center for Isabella and Clare Counties, open 24-hours every day. Listening Ear also answers the "overage" and after-hours calls for all of the 21 counties of the 2-1-1 Northeast Michigan Call Center. The Crisis Center program allows the consumer to direct the call. In most cases, staff do not probe the consumer for information or provide referral information until a request for such information is clearly made by the consumer.

Residential &Community Living Supports Team

Jim Boyd - Director of Residential & Community Living Support Services

Adult Foster Care

Jenny Jacobs, Sherry Kidd, Kaila Morrison, and Robyn Castor - Residential Managers

Service Description

Individuals served in the Residential Program are of ages of eighteen and over. These individuals reside in a licensed adult foster care group-home setting with six persons or fewer. The Residential Services Program is designed to provide 24-hour support services to people with developmental disabilities, mental illness, or dual diagnosis. Opportunities are made available for family involvement, natural supports, and participation in community activities. Services are provided to persons residing in a group home setting or in a semi-independent living situation in Antrim, Clare, Ionia, Isabella, and Kalkaska counties.

Community Living Supports - In-home Help & Listening Ear Activities (LEA)

Candy Reed - CLS Manager

Service Description

The In-Home Help program, also called Community Living Services, is designed to provide in-home assistance to persons with developmental disabilities, mental illness, and those who may need intense supervision and may reside in their own homes or with their families. The In-Home Help Program provides Support Services to people with developmental disabilities living either with their families or in their own homes in Clare, Ionia, Isabella, and Gratiot Counties. Consumers of the In-Home Help program are individuals of any age with a developmental disability, and/or mental illness, and/or requiring intense supervision, either living in their own homes or with family who desire supportive services.

FY 2025 CQI COMMITTEES

Council on Accreditation Standing Committees

Risk and Safety Committee

Purpose: to provide risk management oversight to the agency.
Chair/Vice-Chair: Darla Earnest, Dir. of Facilities; Nikki Crouse, Dir. of Crisis Center
Standing Members: Carol Banks, Dir. of CFS; Jenny Jacob, RM; Joshua Caswell, COO: Lydia Greenman (HR Spec.); Sherry Kidd (RM); Jill Stoddard (CFO)

Training and Ethics Committee

Purpose: to ensure agency training is relevant, engaging, and efficient and all potential ethics concerns are reviewed and monitored for positive outcomes.
Chair/Vice-Chair: Jim Boyd, DRS; Scott Harrison, CHRO
Standing Members: Andrea Maxwell, Dir. of BHS; Candy Reed, RM; Carol Banks, Dir. of CFS; Joshua Caswell, COO; Nikki Crouse, Dir. of CC; Sherry Kidd, RM

Consumer Advocacy and Engagement Committee

Purpose: promotes meaningful consumer involvement, community participation, provides consumer feedback, and advocates for service improvements that enhance accessibility, quality, and outcomes.
Chair/Vice-Chair: Dakota Grover, Program Supervisor
Standing Members: Edie Bowerman, Senior DSP; Vanessa Sargent, Senior DSP; various consumers

Recruitment and Retention Committee

Purpose: to ensure consumer perspective is integrated at all levels of the agency and meaningful community engagement is identified and promoted.
Chair/Vice-Chair: Scott Harrison, CHRO; Candy Reed, RM
Standing Members: Carol Banks, Dir. of CFS; Jenny Jacobs, RM; Joshua Caswell, COO; Nikki Crouse, Dir. of CC; Sherry Kidd, RM

CQI Working Committees

Medical Safety Committee

Purpose: to ensure ongoing safe practices are implemented within the Residential and Community Living Supports programs.
Chair/Vice-Chair: Sherry Kidd, RM; Jim Boyd, DRS
Standing Members: Kaila Morrison, RM; Robyn Castor, RM; Candy Reed, RM; Jenny Jacobs, RM

Policy Review Committee

Purpose: to systematically separate processes and procedures from policy with the agency manual of Operations to create effective work practices within the agency.

Chair/Vice-Chair: Andera Maxwell, Dir. of Behavioral Health Services; Darla Earnest, Dir. of Facilities

Standing Members: Joshua Caswell, COO; Jim Boyd, DRS; Scott Harrison, CHRO

Residential Improvement Committee

Purpose: to streamline processes and procedures in Residential and Community Living Services.

Chair/Vice-Chair:

Standing Members: Candy Reed, RM; Jenny Jacobs, RM; Jim Boyd, DRS; Sherry Kidd, RM

DSP Training Committee (Team Phoenix)

Purpose: to review and revitalize the Direct Support Professional Working With People Training to ensure it is effective, relevant, required, and engaging.

Chair/Vice-Chair: Cindy Seger, CEO; Kaila Morrison, RM

Standing Members: Joshua Caswell, COO, Jim Boyd, DRS; Candy Reed, RM; Edie Bowerman, Sn. DSP; Morgan Monte, HM; Jane Gilmore, Training Consultant

Maintenance Committee

Purpose: to ensure preventative and emergent maintenance needs are met effectively and efficiently.

Chair/Vice-Chair: Darla Earnest, Dir. of Facilities; Joshua Caswell, COO

Standing Members: Jim Boyd, DRS; Joe Young, Main. Contractor: Kent Randall, Main. Contractor

Wellness Committee

Purpose: to develop and implement an agency-wide Wellness program.

Chair/Vice-Chair: Jill Stoddard, CFO

Standing Members: Jenny Jacobs, RM

The strategic plan is a 4-year plan established by the Listening Ear Board of Directors. It is one of the foundational documents guiding the annual and tactical plans that have been developed. Management develops these plans to obtain or further the strategic goals set by the Board. The current strategic plan cycle ends September 30, 2026

Executive Summary

The past fifty-four years have been marked by vast changes at Listening Ear. We have transformed ourselves from a small 24-hour crisis center, serving Isabella County, to a large multi-service agency serving mid and Northern Michigan. This change occurred because of a strategic vision, Board leadership and the changing environment within the Mental Health System. As we talked with citizens throughout Michigan, we heard numerous positive comments about our agency and in particular, how the 24-hour crisis center enhances their community.

Today, we are finding new ways to meet and improve services to our consumers. We have held numerous forums with consumers and staff, talked with stakeholders on every level and looked into the future. We have prepared for system changes and challenges by listening to and communicating with our consumers, maintaining accreditation with the Council on Accreditation, developing a strong financial position, building six endowments, diversifying services, building a strong management team and improving the quality of our services. The key to succeeding in the future will always rest with listening to the consumer, staff members, community and the funding sources we serve. But it will also rest on what we do with the information, the quality of our staff, and a clear mission based on organizational values and consumer needs.

Community support has been outstanding with generous support from different community and private foundations, United Way, governmental entities and private individuals. Because of the community's support, there are now five endowments for Listening Ear through the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation. In addition, there is one endowment through the Midland Area Community Foundation. This support provides the opportunity to enhance our current services for consumers and address the multiple needs of our citizens.

Listening Ear continues to be respected in the community, but we acknowledge that we have had challenges regarding staffing and this has had an effect on our reputation. Covid, as a pandemic, is no longer shaping our lives in an immediate way but the effects are still with us.

We are rebuilding our teams and our relationships with key entities and people in our community. The people we serve remain the focus of our actions and decisions. And our staff continue to be the key to Listening Ear's success and future growth. To that end we are eager to strengthen training, corporate culture, and compensation.

There are opportunities to serve our communities in new and challenging ways. Listening Ear is positioned perfectly to develop the key relationships that expand our service and geographic footprint. We will seek out these opportunities, making ourselves available competent.

Authorization

Listening Ear Crisis Center's Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Director's on August 22, 2023.

Purpose, Mission and Values

Purpose: We are in the vocation of supporting and improving human life around the clock.

Mission: Listening Ear offers hope and opportunity by listening to, supporting and advocating for people who need quality services and safe, affordable housing.

- We believe that the people we support are valued members of the community and that we should support their dreams to achieve employment, spiritual connection and social participation.
- We are committed to focusing on what people can do, the individuals' freedom to develop a life plan, the authority to control relevant resources, the support to obtain dreams and goals and the opportunity to become a responsible citizen.
- We are committed to the highest standards of ethics and integrity, including protecting and advocating for the human rights of each person, while providing a culture of gentleness for our consumers and staff.
- We are responsible to the people we serve, to our employees, and to the communities. Our interactions with segments of community; consumers, government and the general public, must reflect the high standards we profess.
- We are committed to quality management and improvement, consumer satisfaction and meeting or exceeding system performance benchmarks.
- We believe our future as an agency rest squarely on the knowledge, imagination, skills, teamwork and integrity of our employees.
- We are committed to providing affordable services in accord with sound financial practices.
- We are committed to providing innovative and best practice services while creating an environment of continuous learning for our staff.

Organizational Profile and History

The Crisis Center, Inc. d.b.a. Listening Ear Crisis Center is a private, nonprofit, multi-service agency governed by a locally controlled volunteer Board of Directors. Since its inception in 1969, Listening Ear has grown and evolved from a single service agency providing 24-hour crisis services for a few hundred persons, to a multi-service organization serving approximately 40,000 persons annually. In addition, the number of persons employed by Listening Ear during those 54 years increased from 2 persons to over 250 persons – adding to the local economies in our service are. The growth and evolution occurred because of recognizing needs identified in the communities served, and Listening Ear's commitment to quality service and good management.

Three primary components managed by "teams" and led by a "team leader" form the structure of Listening Ear. Each team leader, including the Crisis Center Director, reports to Cindy Seger, the Executive Director. The components are as follows:

Residential Services provides housing and support services for persons with disabilities in group homes, foster care homes or in their own dwellings. The team's Mission is to provide quality, person-centered living arrangements, and support services for adults and children who have disabilities, residing in northern and mid-Michigan areas.
Our Crisis Center which provides 24-hour Crisis Intervention, after-hours mental health on call service to 8 counties (Isabella, Clare, Mecosta, Montcalm, Midland, Gladwin, Osceola, and Gratiot) as well as immediate response for folks calling who may be suicidal. The Crisis Center can refer people in need to local organizations and agencies that can help.

Child & Family Services provides prevention, emergency and treatment services to children and adults. The team is also responsible for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHYP) for at -risk youth, ages 12-17 and a Transitional Living Program (TLP) which helps older homeless youth ages 16-21 in Isabella, Gladwin and Clare County with a range of services, to be able to succeed on their own. The team also provides Child Foster Care to children under the age of 18 years.

The Listening Ear Behavior and Mental health team has two important segments. The counseling team offers crisis and long-term support services to child victims of sexual abuse ages 3-17 but is seeking to provide general counseling to all ages as well. The ABA group provides adaptive behavior therapy to those it can benefit in their own home.

The Business Support team assures overall quality management and financial excellence. This team has several segments, including finance, human resources, and facilities. It maintains and updates the agency's policy and procedure manual, and is responsible for human resources (personnel hiring/separation, personnel reports, and maintenance of records). The team is also responsible for Quality Assurance, including consumer satisfactions surveys, community surveys, internal and external audits, and the management information system that measures outcomes. The team manages financial services, including payroll, billing, vendor payments, reports, income and expense statements. Fiscal control and accounting procedures insure prudent control procedures are in place for payment reconciliation, payroll, and all vouchers and receipts. An annual audit is completed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, government auditing standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133. The agency carries broad liability insurance which includes professional, board and facility liability insurance.

This multi-service team framework is structured to achieve consumer and staff satisfaction through an integrated efficient delivery system. All three components work to assure the quality of services and are consumer driven.

Organizational Mandates

Being a private, non-profit organization, the organizational mandates are those defined in the Agency's Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, Mission and Strategic Plan. Additional mandates occur because of contractual requirements with payers of service and may include such things as:

- Being licensed by the appropriate licensing agency
- Being nationally accredited
- Staff trained in the mental health curriculum
- Customer Satisfaction of at least 85%
- Work within the Recipient Right and Protection Services Laws of Michigan

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

The management team for Listening Ear has conducted a SWOT analysis as part of this strategic process. This analysis is a key component of establishing any strategic plan.

Strengths

- Experience within the community
- Longevity of programs and some key employees
- Knowledge about many different community needs and available programs
- Strong cohesion in the management team
- Commitment of key staff
- Consumer first perspective and culture
- Many staff are open to change and improvement

Weaknesses

- Lack of cohesive or strong vision
- Unstable work force
- Infrastructure for technology is lacking
- Out- of -date and cumbersome processes
- Funding for some of the programs is uncertain or unstable.
- Lack of work life balance for staff
- Not adequately providing for the mental health of staff
- Lack of comprehensive training

Opportunities

- Positioned to provide for trending needs
- Geographical opportunity to provide staffing support

Threats

- Changing attitudes and expectations regarding work
- Funding for wages/benefits in a competitive labor market
- Workforce anxiety

Specific Strategic Goals

1. The Agency will retain and/or expand all current programs, building on our strengths and capitalizing on opportunities while remaining fiscally and programmatically agile to meet the needs of our consumer and larger community

Performance Indicators:

- Increase in the number of consumers served.
- Increase in the number of funding sources utilized.
- Increase in operating budget over previous strategic planning period.

Maintaining the agency service footprint and expanding to meet the needs and demands of our community partners is key to developing Listening Ear into a premium provider in our communities. Specifically, the agency is looking to integrating its services to provide services throughout the full lifecycle of a person and become leader in navigating the points of transition.

II. The Agency will create high quality efficient work processes utilizing state of the art, industry appropriate technology resulting in positive consumer satisfaction.

Performance Indicators:

- Customer satisfaction surveys meet or exceed required benchmarks or show improvement as reported in the CQI process

The process efficiency that current and emerging technology make possible will enable cost savings in support labor that can be reallocated to direct staffing and programs. Further investment in technology has positive effects on staff satisfaction leading to better consumer outcomes.

II. The Agency will meet unmet community needs within our priority population through the development of unrestricted fund resources.

Performance Indicators:

- Fund development revenue will grow by 15% or more in the next four years
- The overall number of donors will increase by 10% over the next four years.

Often only some of the needs of the people we support are able to be met with current partners and funding streams. As the agency continues to seek a holistic approach to the people in our communities, we must be ready to meet some needs that are not currently met. This will take a change in funding strategy that recognizes the need for funding beyond State Medicaid programs and Federal grant. Key to developing a deeper funding strategy will be communicating the LE story and consumers needs to our communities, assigning a staff position to creating and managing funding drives, maintaining a dynamic social media presence that highlights how community partnerships and individual donors have a positive impact on consumer lives, and creating an investment plan for unrestricted funds that have not been fully utilized.

IV. The Agency will work together within the community to identify and address unmet community needs through the development of community collaborative partnerships and leveraged resources.

Performance Indicators:

- Engage one new community collaborative partnership to address a common, unmet community need.

Outside the scope of current consumers there are people that fall through the existing service and support structures. Agencies do not identify the needs or the needs are not in their core competency. To make our communities better for all, agencies need to work together to address these gap issues.

V. The Agency will develop and maintain high quality affordable housing options throughout Mid and Northern Michigan.

Performance Indicators:

- Increase the number of affordable housing units by at least 8 over the next four years.

Affordable housing continues to be issue for many individuals and families throughout the Nation, State, and community. Listening Ear is continuing to provide safe affordable housing and is specifically looking to expand affordable housing options for families.

VI. The Agency will enhance the 24-hour crisis service model to meet the current community needs.

Performance Indicators:

- Ensure the 24-hour Crisis Center program is fully funded and fiscally stable.

The crisis line is a valuable resource in our communities providing referral services, after hours support to community partners, and a listening ear to individuals.

VII. The Agency will ensure that its own workplace and culture is a healthy and supportive place to work.

Performance Indicators:

- Increase in quality outcomes and overall staff confidence and satisfaction.
- Increase in staff retention and reported job satisfaction through the Quality Improvement Report and Plan.

The wellbeing, development, and satisfaction of Listening Ear employees has a direct impact on the wellbeing of the people we serve. Listening Ear will pursue better employee engagement at all levels from evaluating current organizational structure and monitoring prevailing wages and benefit packages in our industry, to exploring employee assistance programs and professional skills development. The agency recognizes the reality of mental health and the need to treat it with the same understanding and respect as physical illnesses that can afflict our staff.