We are living in a unique moment in time. Complex and interrelated challenges — hunger, domestic violence, mental illness, unemployment, and social isolation — continue to weigh heavily on too many members of our community. San Diego, like the rest of the nation, is experiencing unprecedented growth in the older adult population. These realities require a higher level of care, bolder innovation, and greater efficiency than ever before. At the same time, Jewish Family Service is developing an integrated JFS Campus on the site of our current headquarters. We have been presented with a historic opportunity to explore how the place we serve and the way we serve can work together to create an unparalleled client experience.

Moved by the convergence of these factors, Jewish Family Service embarked on an in-depth and collaborative strategic planning process. Recognizing that the wisdom of the broader community was integral to its success, we committed ourselves to a process that was intentionally different than any we’d undertaken before.

Beginning in the fall of 2013, with the guidance of Insyte Partners as our consultants, we convened hundreds of community members in diverse forums, visited many of San Diego County’s best-in-class organizations, and analyzed regional and national data on the assets and needs in our community. We set aside our preconceived notions about JFS’s future and allowed new insights to emerge.
"We've learned that leadership no longer is top down but circular, engaging board, staff, and the community. We have empowered our staff to speak and we've empowered ourselves to learn from them."

— Louis Vener, JFS Board of Directors

As soon as it began, our journey was transformative. We felt the power of board members, staff, and community partners learning together. We expressed a shared commitment to making an impact in our community and implemented new ways to measure that impact. And we engaged in a deep exploration of what it means to be a Jewish agency. At the center of it all was our enduring commitment to our clients and to our community.

Through this process, we discovered Who We Are by exploring the Why, What, and How of Jewish Family Service. We asked ourselves why we are compelled to do our work, what we are uniquely positioned to do in the community, and how we will accomplish it.

On the following pages, you will find the answers to these critical questions. Our three Impact Areas, our Strategic Priorities, and our commitment to using our Jewish Values as our roadmap are the exciting results of this yearlong planning journey.

The dedication, perspective, and critical thinking of every member of the Vision Team made our unique process possible. We sincerely thank you for your participation in this transformative work. It is a privilege to walk this path with you.

B’shalom (In peace),

Jennifer Levitt
President, Board of Directors

Michael Hopkins
Chief Executive Officer
Who We Are

OUR PURPOSE

Jewish Family Service is a client-centered, impact-driven organization working to build a stronger, healthier, more resilient San Diego.

Our work is rooted in an unwavering belief in our clients’ ability to transform their lives. We believe every person deserves the opportunity to become self-sufficient. Our definition of self-sufficiency is broad, reflecting the complex and multi-faceted nature of people’s lives. **To us, becoming self-sufficient means achieving financial, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health.** To that end, we provide services in three related and mutually reinforcing Impact Areas:

**Empowering Individuals & Families To Move Toward Self-Sufficiency**

**Supporting Aging With Dignity**

**Fostering Community Connection & Engagement**

Through this focused program framework, we make a meaningful, measurable, and sustainable difference in the lives of those we serve. We can feel confident in the difference we make together because we measure how our clients’ lives change and how those changes transform the whole community.
We Believe

WE BELIEVE in empowering clients.

WE BELIEVE in engaging volunteers.

WE BELIEVE in being accountable to our supporters.

WE BELIEVE in working collaboratively with partners.

We strive to be a vital resource for all of San Diego.
Why We Serve

OUR JEWISH VALUES

As a Jewish agency, we are called to respond to the specific needs of the Jewish community. At the same time, our Jewish value of tikkun olam, repairing the world, compels us to serve the greater community.

Our Jewish values are the driving force behind our efforts and imbue our work with meaning. To define ourselves as a Jewish agency does not speak simply or exclusively to whom we serve; more profoundly, it speaks to why we serve.

We believe that the only thing that matters as much as what we do is the spirit in which we do it. Compassion, respect, and dignity guide our every action.

“It is not your responsibility to finish the work of perfecting the world, but you are not free to refrain from it either.”

– RABBI TARFON
Through our work, we live out these Jewish Values:

- **Tikkun Olam** REPAIRING THE WORLD
- **Gemilut Hasadim** ACTS OF LOVING KINDNESS
- **Kehillah** COMMUNITY
- **B’riut** HEALTH
- **Tikvah** HOPE
- **R’fuah** HEALING
- **B’tzelem Elohim** IN G-D’S IMAGE/RESPECTING THE INHERENT DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL
- **Shleimut** WHOLENESS
- **Tzedek** JUSTICE
Every older adult has a story, a skill, and a perspective to share—and a continued desire to contribute to our community. It's our job to ensure that their financial, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health supports those goals.

When people want to transform their lives, they have to do it for themselves, but not by themselves. We provide a wide range of integrated services that address the complexity of people’s lives, supporting and encouraging clients to improve their financial, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health.

JFS partners with clients to achieve life-changing goals on their path toward self-sufficiency.

At Jewish Family Service, we recognize that the aging process is complex, demanding, and dynamic. Every older adult has a story, a skill, and a perspective to share—and a continued desire to contribute to our community. It’s our job to ensure that their financial, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health supports those goals.

What if your social circle expanded as you grew older? What if your mind and body were fitter than they’d been in decades? What if this year, you achieved something you’ve been dreaming about your whole life?

At Jewish Family Service, we are committed to saying You Can.

It costs too much. It takes too long. You’re not eligible. Every day, in a dozen ways, individuals and families in our community hear the message You Can’t.

At Jewish Family Service, we are committed to saying You Can.

Our Impact Areas

Empowering Individuals & Families To Move Toward Self-Sufficiency

Supporting Aging With Dignity
JFS is dedicated to ensuring older adults lead safe, independent, and healthy lives — and remain engaged, contributing members of our San Diego community.

What if you grew older? What if your mind and body were fitter than they’d been in decades? What if this year, you achieved something you’ve been dreaming about your whole life?

We recognize that the aging process is complex, demanding, and dynamic. No two aging experiences are the same.

People who are truly healthy have someone they can laugh with, confide in, and depend on. JFS empowers clients to become independent in the context of a caring community by connecting them to individuals and groups who can relate to them and support their goals.

We are a home for the whole community—for people in search of better lives and for those seeking to make better lives possible. JFS is a hub of volunteer leadership and innovation — providing meaningful service opportunities within our agency and enhancing volunteer engagement across our entire community.

Among peer organizations, JFS is an active, collaborative partner. We know that the complex, long-standing issues facing San Diego require the attention and coordinated action of many organizations. Together with community partners, we leverage our resources to help clients find solutions to their challenges and advocate for policies that address those issues’ root causes.

You seek meaningful connection. To other people. To causes. To something bigger than yourself. We all do.

At Jewish Family Service, we recognize that self-sufficiency means being connected. This is why we are dedicated to building deep, strong relationships among clients, volunteers, and organizations across San Diego.
How We Serve

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Live Our Jewish Values
JFS responds to the specific needs of the Jewish community and — as part of our belief in tikkun olam, our obligation to repair the world — serves the community at large. We continually question, debate, learn, and revise our understanding of what makes us Jewish.

Focus Our Impact
We focus our work in three overlapping and mutually reinforcing impact areas.
- JFS Empowers Individuals & Families To Move Toward Self-Sufficiency,
- Supports Aging With Dignity, and
- Fosters Community Connection & Engagement across San Diego.

Serve the Whole Person
We provide a wide range of integrated services to help individuals and families transform their lives. Success means financial stability, physical health, emotional support, social connection, and spiritual fulfillment.

Act as People of Principle
Every interaction with JFS is guided by shared principles. Every board member, staff member, and volunteer is mission-, framework-, and client-centered; impact-driven; and learning-focused. We are committed to authentic communication, innovative thinking, and effective collaboration.

Be the Place to Do Good
We create meaningful volunteer opportunities for people to direct their deepest passions and unique talents in service to JFS and its clients. We act as a volunteer leader and convener in the greater San Diego community.

Team Up
JFS is a collaborative member of the San Diego community. We actively partner to identify, address, and measure the effectiveness of our solutions to the community’s most complex and pressing challenges.
Strengthen Leadership & Governance

The JFS Board of Directors is one of our agency’s greatest strengths — providing vital support in pursuit of the agency’s long-term goals and acting as a team of JFS ambassadors in the community. Attracting, engaging, and cultivating leaders who provide strategic guidance and meaningful community connections is critical to our success today and in the future.

Cultivate Exemplary Staff

JFS’s dedication to community impact and exceptional client experience is reflected in our commitment to recruiting, developing, and retaining the highest-performing, most passionate staff. We create a climate of learning, innovation, opportunity, and success.

Secure Our Future

Fulfilling our long-term commitment to the community requires equally long-term financial stability. JFS maintains a diversified funding portfolio and ensures that every dollar we raise supports our mission.
The Who, Why, What, and How of Jewish Family Service outlined in this document will be our directive over the next five years. New programs and services will emerge in response to evolving challenges and opportunities, and the strategies employed will be revised to reflect our changing environment. But what will not waver are our commitments to exceptional client service and community impact.

As is fitting for a community-driven organization, especially for Jewish Family Service, we engaged in this process together, learned through shared experiences, considered one another’s perspectives, strived for consensus, and proceeded respectfully when perspectives differed.

As we transition to the implementation phase of the plan, we will again call upon the collaborative spirit that is core to Jewish Family Service.

Together, we will create a San Diego where every individual and family is self-sufficient, ages with dignity, and is socially connected.
If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
But if I am only for myself, who am I?
If not now, when?

— HILLEL
Strategic Planning Vision Team

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Strategic Planning Vision Team

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Melinda Wilkes, *Director of Volunteer Engagement*

*Member of the Strategic Planning Leadership Team  **Member of the Strategic Planning Core and Leadership Teams

Learning Journeys, Immersion Experiences & JFS 101s

We would like to thank the following organizations, businesses, institutions, and individuals for providing Jewish Family Service of San Diego the opportunity to learn more about their experiences and successes, and the populations that they serve.

**LEARNING JOURNEYS**
Feeding America San Diego
Francis Parker School
High Tech High
Jewish Family & Career Services (JF&CS) of Atlanta
Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest
Price Charities
Qualcomm

Rabbi Panel Discussion (Rabbi Michael Berk — Congregation Beth Israel, Rabbi Lenore Bohm — Waters of Eden, Rabbi Josef Fradkin — Chabad Hebrew Academy, Rabbi Yael Ridberg — Congregation Dor Hadash)
Rady Children’s Hospital-San Diego
Sharp HealthCare

**IMMERSION EXPERIENCES**
Connections Housing San Diego
JFS College Avenue Center Senior Health Fair
JFS Emerging Leaders Salon Forum
JFS *Hand Up* Youth Food Pantry Military Housing Food Distribution

Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank
Leichtag Foundation
Serving Seniors (formerly Senior Community Centers)
Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital
Substance Abuse Panel Discussion at JFS

**JFS 101s**
Refugee Resettlement & Immigration Services
Aging & Wellness Services

Crisis & Community Services
Infrastructure Programs
A COMMUNITY IS TOO HEAVY TO CARRY ALONE.

— DEUTERONOMY RABBHAH 1:10