In 2012, Tender Mercies developed a 10 Year Strategic Plan to refine its mission, vision and values. This process utilized the Strategy Development and Deployment System – a proven process emphasizing focus and priority-setting to gain consensus on a select number of goals. The agency’s “OGSM” (Objectives, Goals, Strategies, and Measures) provides the backbone of the Plan and provides clear goals and identifies the strategic choices to achieve them.

Tender Mercies defined Objective is “To be and be recognized as the premier provider of supportive housing in the region for homeless adults with mental illness.” To accomplish this objective, the organization has focused on increasing its residential capacity with necessary operating income, improving the work culture, and maximizing the quality of care provided to the residents. A cross section of the organization from front line staff to Board of Trustees members designed strategies to align with the primary objective.

Strategies around growth have been developed to grow the agency’s capacity from 150 units of housing to 270. By the end of 2019, 199 units of permanent supportive housing will be managed by Tender Mercies. The agency’s 7th facility (now 6th with consolidation of Elm and Race) will house an additional 57 residents; its development is being funded through a combination of federal, State, and local sources.

A second strategy to address staff development and organization culture was implemented in order to facilitate growth, promote and sustain work culture, and optimize staffing in order to serve more needing the agency’s vital services. As a result, Tender Mercies was name a Top Workplace by the Cincinnati Enquirer in 2018 & 2019.

Lastly, in order to optimize resident quality of life and to remain viable in a competitive funding environment, strategies have been developed to place an even greater focus on resident independence including indicators around psychiatric stability, residential stability, income and employment, substance use, and ability to perform activities of daily living such as grooming, budgeting, self-monitoring of mental health symptoms, and ability to access public transportation. As a result, 100% of residents either maintained their housing or exited to a permanent housing destination in 2017; in addition, there has been 30% decrease in the number of residents who return to homelessness after they exit Tender Mercies.

The agency engages outside consultants to help monitor progress in achieving the objectives outlined in the 10 Year Strategic Plan. Progress is evaluated quarterly and a renewal of the plan occurs annually.