This report represents Seneca Family of Agencies's responses to Charting Impact, a joint project of BBB Wise Giving Alliance, GuideStar USA Inc, and Independent Sector. Charting Impact uses five simple yet powerful questions to encourage strategic thinking and help organizations share concise information about their plans and progress toward impact.

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Mission:
Seneca Family of Agencies helps children and families through the most difficult times of their lives.

The content of this Charting Impact Report is the sole product and responsibility of Seneca Family of Agencies. This report does not in any way represent an endorsement from Independent Sector, BBB Wise Giving Alliance, or GuideStar, nor does it represent fulfillment of the BBB Wise Giving Alliance’s Standards for Charity Accountability. For more information on Charting Impact, visit www.guidestar.org/chartingimpact
1. What are we aiming to accomplish?

In 1985, Seneca Family of Agencies (Seneca) set out to develop mental health treatment and support services on the principle that emotionally troubled youth do not themselves fail, but are instead failed by systems unable to address their complex and specialized needs. From day one, Seneca has provided unconditional care for youth with the highest emotional needs, along with services and supports for their families. The children, adolescents and families we serve frequently experience a cycle of broken, disrupted and stressed relationships, resulting in a pattern of inconsistent love, care, attachment and stability. The impact of this can leave them unable to connect with anyone, including family, friends or service providers. Seneca’s programs and services are designed to break that pattern. Our clinicians, counselors and teachers are trained to stay with each young person as they work through the challenges that have previously resulted in disruptions in their family, school setting and their community. Many families have experienced numerous failures from other services intended to help them so our initial, and most important, intervention is rebuilding trust and engagement in the formal systems able to help their family. We then help them rebuild and repair those disrupted attachments with their family, their school and their community. Throughout this process, we maintain a stance of steadfast humility and hope, two core values represented in all services offered at Seneca, and even in the midst of profound need, we do not give up on any child or family. Seneca was found on the premise of and dedication to providing unconditional care to help every child and family achieve their goals no matter how challenging the barriers or profound the need.

2. What are our strategies for making this happen?

Services at Seneca reflect strong partnerships across the many systems serving vulnerable youth and their families. Our partners and stakeholders include public child welfare, behavioral health, special education and juvenile probation agencies, universities, foundations, individual donors, legislators, advocates, and other nonprofit service providers. While closely aligned with the desired outcomes and goals of our stakeholders and partners, our services address four key areas—permanency, education, mental health, and innovation—all with the mission to help children, youth and families succeed through their most difficult times. Mental Health: Seneca maintains a flexible and ever-evolving approach to mental health interventions, integrating numerous services to best meet the needs of a broad spectrum of youth and families. Seneca’s continuum of care includes clinic-based and community-based treatment and intensive case management services, serving high-risk youth who are currently living in family homes, foster homes or group care. Education: Seneca believes that all children should have ready access to equitable and exceptional educational services. To achieve that goal, Seneca offers a broad array of special education services designed to accelerate each child’s academic and behavioral progress, whether in public school, public charter school, or in an alternative non-public school setting. Permanency: Every child needs and deserves the meaningful, lifelong connections of a permanent, loving family. Permanency is the single most important factor associated with positive outcomes for maltreated and traumatized children. Seneca Family of Agencies, incorporating the programs of Kinship Center and Canyon Acres, provides a wide array of permanency-focused programs and services to help ensure that every child has a safe and loving place to call home. Innovation: Innovation is at the heart of our agency and it plays a critical role in the partnerships we create to effectively meet the needs of the most disadvantaged children and families. This is reflected in the way we develop, implement and orchestrate interventions, designed to help our clients leverage their own strengths to sustainably address their needs. As a nationally recognized organization, accredited by The Joint Commission, Seneca works hard to stay ahead of the curve and respond to current and relevant community needs. To this end, agency leaders and program staff assess, analyze and address presenting needs in each community. Intervention approaches are designed to address the presenting need and to anticipate and prevent situations that place other children and families at risk of extreme hardship and failure. The Seneca Institute for Advanced Practice trains child welfare, behavioral health and juvenile justice professionals in a range of evidence-based and promising practices, in order to strengthen the larger systems of care for the most vulnerable youth and their families.
3. What are our organization’s capabilities for doing this?

Seneca has dedicated itself to becoming a “system of care” agency, providing an array of community-based, school-based and family-focused services for children, youth and families throughout California, and most recently, within Washington State. With over 1,100 highly-dedicated staff working in 50 locations throughout California, Seneca offers one of the most comprehensive and highly-respected child and family service systems in the state. With roots providing residential and non-public school/day treatment services, Seneca has expanded its continuum of care to include the following services and programs for young people who are faced with serious emotional, behavioral and learning difficulties and their families:

- Intensive Treatment Foster Care
- Family-focused Wraparound
- Public school-based mental health services
- Mobile Response Team (MRT) services
- Multisystemic Therapy (MST) for probation-involved youth
- Mental health services and supportive housing for transition age youth
- Intensive Case Management (ICM) services for probation-involved youth
- Unconditional Education multi-tiered, whole-school intervention services for public school and public charter school students
- Lifelong Connections permanency services, including intensive Family Finding and Engagement
- Adoption and adoption support services
- Children’s mental health clinics providing family-based treatment
- Kinship care and family ties services to support relatives caring for family members’ children
- Guided Animal Intervention Therapy (GAIT) allows disabled and disadvantaged children to connect with horses and build self-esteem, creativity, assertiveness, leadership, team work and positive relationships
- Technical assistance in the provision of multi-tiered, whole-school intervention services for new charter school developers in Washington state
- Partnership with Seattle Public Schools to transform its system of supports for students with disabilities

Across this diverse array of services, ranging from early intervention to the most intensive level of care, Seneca maintains an overarching treatment approach referred to as Unconditional Care. Refined through decades of practice, the Unconditional Care clinical practice model includes tools and strategies to assess and address the relational, behavioral, and ecological needs of youth and caregivers impacted by trauma, poverty, and other complex stressors. The essence of Unconditional Care is that Seneca meets children and families where they are at and provides the services they need without ever rejecting a client because of the difficult behaviors that lead to their need for the program’s support in the first place. Our teams stick with the children and families despite difficult situations and provide unwavering support. Seneca’s treatment model is thoroughly described in our book: Unconditional Care: Relationship-Based, Behavioral Intervention with Vulnerable Children and Families

4. How will we know if we're making progress?

Seneca’s Performance Improvement Strategy is driven by a commitment to continuous quality improvement as well as data-informed leadership priorities. The agency has implemented its own electronic health record (EHR) system and subsequent dashboard that houses clinical documentation and allows for immediate and timely feedback regarding client profiles, progress, and outcomes. In 2010, Seneca began to use the Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment in all of its behavioral health programs, recognizing the CANS’ accessibility, and value in guiding treatment planning, measuring client progress, and evaluating program performance. The agency’s Department of Strategic Initiatives and Performance Improvement continues to develop and use creative data collection procedures to capture service efforts and client outcomes. This data is used to report progress to its public agency partners in 12 California counties, as well as to individual and foundation donors throughout the state. Following are program highlights from the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014:

- Seneca provided over 300,000 hours of direct mental health service hours to nearly 7,300 clients.
- Over 1,000 youth in acute crisis were diverted from psychiatric hospitalization by Seneca crisis intervention and stabilization programs.
- Over 600 youth and their families received intensive home-based mental health services within Seneca’s wraparound programs.
- 178 adoptions were finalized and nearly 800 kinship families were strengthened and supported.
- Seneca conducted nearly 11,000 searches to reconnect youth with family members.
- Seneca’s partnerships with 55 public schools provided individualized mental health services for over 1,000 struggling students, while 2,500 students benefited from Seneca’s whole-school, multi-tiered intervention programs.
- 100% of parents were engaged in planning services for their children enrolled in Seneca’s school-based mental health programs.
- Over 20,000 professionals from 156 organizations attended trainings provided by the Seneca Institute for Advanced Practice.
5. What have and haven't we accomplished so far?

During its first three decades, Seneca has experienced significant success as a service provider, advocate, and thought leader in the fields of child welfare, behavioral health, juvenile justice, and education. We have instituted and advanced creative efforts to serve children and youth in their homes, neighborhood schools and communities, rather than in restrictive and/or institutional settings. While in the past Seneca has relied largely upon public grants and partnerships to support programs, we are committed to increasing private funding sources which enhance our ability to address the most pressing needs of youth, families and communities with innovative and creative interventions. For example, growing access to foundation grants and individual donations is allowing Seneca to expand its Unconditional Education (UE) model to more and more public and charter schools in the San Francisco Bay Area, thus helping more children and families achieve academic gains. At each of these schools, a UE Coach partners with the principal and teachers to create a data-driven, multi-tiered system of support that improves the school culture and climate so that all students feel safe, engaged, and ready to learn, no matter how exceptional their need for academic, behavioral and/or social-emotional support. These private funding sources are providing creative support services to help children and families through their most difficult times. Going forward, we hope to apply the continuing generosity of our existing supporters, as well as other foundations and individual donors, to the further expansion of the Unconditional Education project. Additionally, we hope to focus on developing and expanding our relationships with donors to fund other innovative programs to provide support for our most vulnerable children and their families where and when they need it most.