

---

# Family Justice Center Strategic Plan 2022-2027

## OVERVIEW

This report is a summary of the Family Justice Center Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2027. It reflects the organization's second strategic planning process in its history. In conversations from May to September 2022, the Planning Team, focus group participants, and survey respondents identified four key shifts for the organization:

- Shift From Individual Advocacy to Systems Advocacy Addressing Root Causes
- Shift From Responding to Violence to Preventing Harm
- Shift From Transactional to Transformative
- Shift From Separate to Connected and Accountable

All together, these recommendations represent an evolution from the foundational stage of development in the Family Justice Center's first ten years of existence to a new stage of expansion to better address the root causes of all forms of violence, including historical trauma and structural racism. These are described in more detail in the Key Shifts section below.

**Current Family Justice Center Vision:** We envision a vibrant community free from coercion and fear. In achieving that, our Center is a community hub for education, comprehensive and integrated services in the pursuit of justice, hope, and healing.

**Current Family Justice Center Mission:** Our mission is to bring together our community to support the healing of family violence survivors, and to integrate capable partners with a comprehensive service approach to renew individuals and our community from a trauma of family violence.

## OBJECTIVES

The goals for the strategic planning process included:

- Staff shape the process and make meaning together from the survey data and stakeholder conversations,
- Stakeholders from staff, Board of Directors, community partners, clients, and government systems engage with the most important questions facing the Family Justice Center, and
- The strategic plan report is accessible and useful to shape the activities, partnerships, operations, and culture of Family Justice Center.

---

# ACTIVITIES

Strategic planning took place from May to September 2022. Planning activities fell under three categories:

## 1. Planning Team

The Planning Team was created to shape the process and make meaning from the survey data and focus groups. The planning team:

Bella Valladares, Administrative Assistant  
Janell Coleman, Consultant for Community Fellowship  
LaShara Johnson, Program Coordinator  
Natalie Oleas, Central Center Director  
Shannon Starzyk, East Center Director  
Susun Kim, Executive Director

While not on the Planning Team, staff Brenda Solorio and Marisol Martinez also substantially supported the process. Iris Podschun, Senior Director of Coaching and Collaboration at RCF Connects, facilitated the strategic planning process and authored this report.

## 2. Surveys

An anonymous survey was created to gather information from stakeholders throughout the Family Justice Center's networks. Forty-seven people responded, including seven in Spanish.

Questions included:

- What are the most important roles of the Family Justice Center?
- Do you have suggestions that would strengthen Family Justice Center's work in any of these areas?
- If Family Justice Center were to strengthen or increase their work in Advocacy, what would you want to see?
- How do you define Community Building?
- If the Family Justice Center were to strengthen or increase Community Building, what would you want to see?
- When it comes to equity and racial equity, what is the Family Justice Center already doing well?
- What would you like to see Family Justice Center do to promote equity and racial equity even more within the culture and operations of the organization?
- What would you like to see Family Justice Center do to promote equity and racial equity at the community, policy, or systems level?

The survey also included questions about roles, demographics, and life experiences. Of those who answered these questions:

- 41% identified as Latinx, 34% White, 17% Black, 14% mixed, 10% AAPI, and 3% Native.
- 100% identified as female; 13% identified as LGBTQIA.
- 36% identified as a community member, 31% current Family Justice Center staff, 25% nonprofit partner, 17% Family Justice Center Board of Directors, 14% government partner, 8% current or former client, and 3% funder.
- 51% identified as a survivor of Interpersonal Violence, Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Elder Abuse, Child Abuse, and/or Human Trafficking.

### 3. Focus Groups

In July and August 2022, we held seven focus groups, five in English and two in Spanish with thirty-one people total. (See appendix for focus group attendees.) The focus group conversations included these prompts:

- It's 2027, the five-year anniversary for the Family Justice Center's Strategic Plan, and you're at the party. How are you celebrating? What are you celebrating? What's different about the organization?
- When you think about violence prevention, what would you like to see shift in the next 3-5 years?
- When you think about policy advocacy and systems change, what would you like to see shift in the next 3-5 years?

Shannon Starzyk, East Center Director, also held two mini-focus groups of youth and parents from All Children Thrive at the East Center. She asked the youth: "If you were the Mayor of the City of Antioch, what things would change in the city and how could the Family Justice Center help support you in reaching your vision?" She asked the parents: "What can the Family Justice Center do to better support the youth in the community? What would you like to see more of and how do you see the Family Justice Center providing support around these services?"

## KEY SHIFTS

At this stage in their growth, the Family Justice Center is being asked to take a holistic approach to disrupt the cycle of violence. Across the conversations and survey data, participants described several key shifts related to both what the Family Justice Center does and how they do it. These shifts are:

- Shift From Individual Advocacy to Systems Advocacy Addressing Root Causes
- Shift From Responding to Violence to Preventing Harm
- Shift From Transactional to Transformative
- Shift From Separate to Connected and Accountable

**"When I imagine our five-year celebration for the Family Justice Center strategic plan, I see a party that is joyful and colorful and creative. I see people who have survived all kinds of violence in their home or as a child, who have experienced healing and restoration and feeling loved. That includes people who harmed people."**  
**Devorah Levine, Leshar Foundation**

There is alignment and overlap with several of these shifts. For some, the scope of the shift described and/or the specific ideas within each category are beyond the mission, strengths, or capacity of the Family Justice Center to implement themselves. Nevertheless, there is a crucial role for the Family Justice Center to hold the vision for that shift, as well as support the shift in other ways such as forming new partnerships or incubating new services.

**“In doing advocacy, we have to look to the community leaders who are really connected to their community.”**

**LaShara Johnson, Program Coordinator, Family Justice Center**

## **From Individual Advocacy to Systems Advocacy Addressing Root Causes**

- Ensure advocacy addresses systems change and root causes of violence - capitalism, structural racism, trauma, etc.
- Advocate for community’s top needs like affordable housing
- Center staff and/or partners build power with survivors to advocate for change
- Build partner capacity and skills for systems advocacy

## **Shift from Responding to Violence to Preventing Harm**

- Address social determinants of violence through partner and community education, including topics such as housing security and structural racism
- Engage, educate, and support youth. Ideas in this area include:
  - Social Emotional Development and healthy relationship education in school
  - Youth Community Centers with educational activities, college and career preparation, sports, mentorship, cultural expression, arts, therapy and emotional wellbeing, and opportunities to give back
  - Job training pipeline to employment at the Family Justice Center and partners
- Expand support for people causing harm

**“Why is CHAT training only for clients? We’re all in interpersonal relationships. We all have challenges and it’s a spectrum. Sometimes I’m not at my best, especially with the people I’m closest to. I’m always learning. There’s something powerful about putting your own skin in the game and saying this is not just for you, but I’m willing to do it myself, I’m willing to do it with you. That’s the magic of the Family Justice Center: When we’re able to connect with people where it’s not just like I’m a professional doing my work, but I am this caring human being first. We can get things done and be relational. If we make a little more space, something emergent and powerful could come out.” Annabelle Berrios, consultant and former Family Justice Center staff**

- 
- Community leaders are trained in Restorative Circles and other transformative approaches to violence and conflict resolution
  - Spaces for healing designed and led by men

## Shift from Transactional to Transformative

- Listen deeply and share stories
  - Staff training and practices in cultural humility
  - Staff training in historical trauma, systemic oppression, racial equity and justice, and white supremacy culture
- Define success based on client's culture and goals
- Consider new service models in addition to Navigation that provide deeper engagement with clients, such as promotoras and/or coaching
- New and deeper partnerships especially for healing resources - culturally and racially diverse therapists, coaching, support groups, events to build resilience (art, nature, etc.)
- Public education campaign led by survivors

## Shift from Separate to Connected and Accountable

- Identify underserved communities and intentionally include communities who have not been at the table
- Center staff present at community events and in community spaces
- Services are accessible throughout the county, and welcoming to communities most impacted by violence, including:
  - Culturally specific programming
  - Language access and equity
  - Disability justice
- The Family Justice Center staff reflect the diversity of communities impacted by violence
- Organizational support for survivors' ideas and entrepreneurship

**"I imagine representation of my Black community, the LGBTQ+ community, all the diverse populations of people that the Family Justice Center serves. The space has now become a container for conversations and a bridge for diverse groups of people to come together, to build power, then disperse to become change agents within the community. And I really want to see this thing move to the Center being a place where the community has a clear voice and place of power within it." Janell Coleman, Community Fellowship Consultant**

- 
- Clients are stakeholders in the organization, and decisions are transparent and include community input
  - The Board of Directors reflects the diversity of communities impacted by violence

## NEXT STEPS

### Vision, Mission, Values

On the Planning Team, staff asked the question “Who and what do we stand up for?” Staff and leadership will continue to explore this question internally and align both internal culture and external partners with a powerful collective vision for racial and gender equity and freedom from harm, whether interpersonal violence, cycles of trauma, or unjust systems.

The staff and Board of Directors will revisit their mission and vision statements to align them with the more comprehensive vision that is already alive in the Family Justice Center. This new, inspirational language should connect the organization with new clients, organizational partners, and donors, and reflect the languages and cultures of the communities the Family Justice Center serves. For example, “Our vision is healthy families and communities, free of violence. We prevent violence by building power to shift culture and change unjust laws. We support people impacted by violence, including those that cause harm, to get the resources and support they need to thrive.”

Finally, the organizational values will be updated to include any values, such as cultural humility, that are crucial to provide quality services in diverse communities, and to create a healthy culture and thriving workforce that’s diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and other identities and lived experiences.

### Measuring Results

The planning process yielded a consensus that it is critical to measure the outcomes and impact of the Family Justice Center’s work. It is challenging to measure prevention efforts as well as things like increased joy and healing at the individual and community level. For each priority shift the Family Justice Center takes on, there will be two to three clear measurable goals, and a simple evaluation plan including rituals to reflect on new data and changes at the population level.

### Questions

The Family Justice leaders will explore the following questions as they continue refining the goals and outcomes of the shifts described above:

- What do we stand for?
- Who are our communities?
- How do we truly make an impact?

**“Folks may be humble in terms of resources, but they’re rich in terms of insight and wisdom.” Annabelle Berrios, consultant and former Family Justice Center staff**

- 
- How will we know if we're successful? What do we want to see in five years?
  - What is the capacity and role of the Family Justice Center in implementing these goals?  
Are we backbone support and referrals, providing services, or something else?

## Assess Relationships

The Family Justice Center is an organization of partnerships. In addition to its annual partner survey, the Family Justice Center will take time to reflect on each of these relationships, with questions such as:

- Who are we partnering with the most often? Who are we partnering with the most deeply?
- Is this partner aligned with our evolving vision?
- Is the partnership healthy?
- Do each organization's roles make sense?
- What does the partnership need?

There may be partnerships that need new boundaries and expectations, additional training and capacity building, or even to complete and end the partnership if there's no longer alignment.

## Planning

Once the vision and outcomes are clear, staff will create action plans for each new activity or shift, so it is incorporated into existing job descriptions or new positions and fundraising activities.

## SUMMARY

This exciting new phase of the Family Justice Center's evolution is an opportunity to focus on preventing violence by changing policies and systems, building power with survivors, addressing the legacy of structural racism, and cultivating opportunities for education and healing for both survivors and those who have caused harm.

---

## APPENDIX

FOCUS GROUP ATTENDEES	
Name	Role
Melody Saint-Saens	Partner
Tamina Alon	Government
Kelly Ransom	Partner
Marla Stuart	Government
LaShara Johnson	Staff
Vanessa Russell	Board
Janet Kennedy	Board
Debra Vinson	Staff
Stephanie Rivera	Board
Jamie Elmasu	Board
Devorah Levine	Board
Angie Coffee	Board
Adam Wilks	Government
Melanie Corrieo	Staff
Natalie Oleas	Staff
Susannah Meyer	Partner
Annabelle Berrios	Partner, Former Staff
Oravanh Thamassen	Partner, former staff
Swostika Timalsina	Staff
Marisol Martinez	Staff
Shannon Starzyk	Staff
Janell Coleman	Community Fellowship
Brenda Solorio	Staff
Modesta Mauricio	Community Fellowship
Esmeralda Caldenas	Community Fellowship
Dana Filkowski	Government
Bella Valladares	Staff
Dora Munoz	Partner



---

Fadua Farjat-Galdamez	Government
Claudia Velasco	Partner
Lorena Cruz	Partner